كِتَابُ التَّوْحِيدِ

KITĀB AL-TAWḤĪD

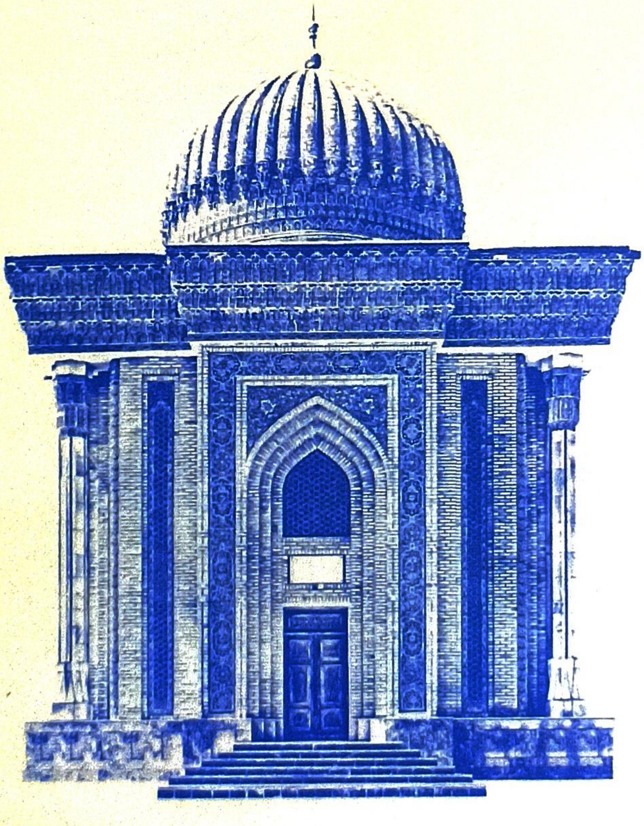
The Book of Monotheism

Abū Manṣūr
AL-MĀTURĪDĪ

Translated by
Tahir Uluç

Edited with annotations
and an introduction by
Ramon Harvey

— II —



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Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī

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Abû Manşûr al-Mâturidi

Abû Manşûr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmûd al-Samarkandī al-Mâturidi (d. 333/944)

al-Mâturidi, born in the village of Mâturid near Samarqand, occupies a position of eminence within the annals of Islamic intellectual history, primarily due to his seminal work, *Kitâb al-Tawḥid*. This comprehensive theological treatise, a cornerstone of Sunni intellectual tradition, systematically elucidates and defends fundamental Islamic doctrines from a Ḥanafi perspective.

Born during the waning years of the ʿAbbâsid Caliphate, al-Māturīdī witnessed the rise of the Sâmânids in his native region. While biographical details concerning his formative years remain limited, his scholarly pursuits flourished under the tutelage of eminent Ḥanafī jurists such as Abū Bakr Aḥmad al-Jūzjānī and Abū Naṣr al-Iyāḍī. Within *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, al-Māturīdī eloquently demonstrates the indispensable role of both reason and revelation in the attainment of religious understanding. Through meticulous analysis, he addresses intricate theological questions pertaining to God's existence and attributes, the nature of prophethood, and other pivotal issues. By adeptly refuting divergent theological viewpoints and articulating a distinct theological framework, al-Māturīdī's work continues to exert a profound influence within Sunnī Islam, solidifying his legacy as the founder of the influential Māturīdī school of theology, eponymously designated as Māturīdism.

Tahir Uluç (Prof. Dr.)

Professor Tahir Uluç is a leading scholar of Islamic Philosophy at Necmettin Erbakan University's Divinity Faculty in Konya, Turkey. With a PhD in Islamic Philosophy from Selçuk University, he has dedicated over two decades to teaching and research at both institutions. His scholarship spans a wide range of topics, including classical Islamic philosophy, Sufism, Islamic theology, classical and modern Turkish thought, contemporary Islamic intellectual trends, and Persian philosophical and Sufi traditions.

His research delves into key figures and themes within Islamic thought, notably Muhyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī's symbolic language expressing the doctrine of the Oneness of Being (waḥdat al-wujūd), Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl's Ishraqī philosophy and its connection to the Peripatetic (Mashshāʾī) philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (including critiques of the latter), and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī's critique of the philosophical concept of the pre-eternity of the world.

Professor Uluç is fluent in English, Arabic, and Persian, in addition to his native Turkish.

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Chapter Five

Enquiries of Messengerhood[715]

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[715] Topaloğlu and Aruçi titled this chapter Enquiries of Prophethood (*masāʾil al-nubuwwāt*). Al-Māturīdī, however, consistently refers to messengers and messengerhood (*risāla*) within the section, while also occasionally using the term prophethood (*nubuwwa*).

5.1. Enquiry: [Affirmation of the Necessity of Messengerhood]

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: People debated messengerhood, and the leaders of guidance, the pioneers of goodness and the sages of humanity affirmed it, whereas the following people denied it:

1) Whoever is ignorant of his creator.

2) Whoever acknowledges Him but is ignorant of His commands and prohibitions.

3) Whoever acknowledges [divine commands and prohibitions] but claims that reason suffices from messengerhood.

4) In addition, those who compare the miracles of those who claim messengerhood to the performances of oracles, magicians, and illusionists.

5) Whoever says: [Those who have seen the messengers] and have been in their presence may have lacked capacity [to respond to their miracles] because people do not exert themselves or make efforts in such things; [hence, the messengers] have not tested everyone's strength.

The Shaykh [Abū Manṣūr] said:

1) Let us debate [the evidence for the Creator] with the one who denies the Creator's existence because, in order to be able to argue about the sending [of messengers], His isness and existence must be accepted first. Additionally, the two matters [i.e., the existence of the Creator and the sending of messengers] are possible [to prove] together by the miracles of the messengers. This is because [the messengers] grew up in a community who knew their states and who used to perceive the extent of their efforts. Therefore, when [the messengers] perform miracles that dominate their intellects, [the people] must know that [the messengers] are truthful in what they report from the one who has sent them, and that these miracles are from His creations, because they [i.e., the people] know that they cannot do similar miracles. For their messengerhood is from an omniscient wise one who can create evidence to prove His [existence]. So, even if [his people] do not see [God], they will know Him. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) Then, wisdom in creation is not realized for whoever denies [God's] command, prohibition, promise and threat. On the contrary, [the world] has come from Him in creation, and then it perishes [on this view]. It is known that one whose actions end up like this is not wise. Thus, the wisdom of the Creator of the world, according to what He made in it of evidence for His oneness and the sublimity of His sovereignty, indicates that He is wise. *God alone leads to success.*

Since God, exalted is He, is essentially independent and wise in His actions, He created the creatures to endure until the end of the power He has determined for them. Then, He made it impossible for them to sustain except on food and made them love to endure and extend [their] life. Had he not prescribed commands and prohibitions for [people], everyone would run to sustain and extend [their] life, and at the same time would want to achieve pleasure and desires. Then, their fellow human beings would do similar things, so that discord and strife would arise amongst them. This, in turn, would drive them into conflict, and in that is the fear of [their] extinction due to acting for what ensures their survival.[716] Therefore, He has revealed the forbidden, the lawful, the command and the prohibition, as well as promises and threats. In this way, everyone will know what belongs to him and what does not belong to him, so he will be safe from all hostilities and his life will be preserved.

Whoever denies [God's] command, prohibition and testing has in mind the testing in the visible world, which is meant to discover what is hidden and to reveal what is concealed. Commands and prohibitions are meant for the person who commands or forbids to obtain a benefit or to ward off something unpleasant. Since God is essentially independent and omniscient with respect to secret and hidden things, the familiar meaning of testing, command and prohibition disappears [i.e., it cannot be applied to God].

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: We say, and success is with God: Were His commands, prohibitions and tests as mentioned [i.e., for the familiar purposes of human beings], He would do them in order to do away with what He dislikes, to obtain what He likes, or to get rid of a fault. However, God, exalted is He, has not created the world for [these purposes];

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[716] See al-Māturīdī's Introduction.

the same applies to commanding, prohibiting and testing [i.e., they have not been instituted for these purposes]. Also, in this case, [such actions] are only the actions of dependent creatures, whose rank will rise and whose value will increase, and if they act otherwise, they will suffer harm sooner and face evil in the future. However, one who is essentially wise and independent does not act to gain benefit or to avert harm. The same is true for [His] commands and prohibitions. Since, as we have explained, the two who are [respectively] testing and tested[717] differ in terms of independence and wisdom, one cannot be measured by the other. It is impossible for a wise agent [i.e., God] to [commit] evil [that is contrary] to the wisdom of lordship. Therefore, the unnecessary thought mentioned is erroneous.

Then, He divided creation into two parts, harmful and beneficial, fashioning each substance in a way that could receive both pain and pleasure. It is not possible that He fashioned [creation] in such a manner except for certain results. He warns [people] about these results and encourages them to achieve them, by threatening [them] with severe torments and promising pleasures. Thus, people both desire and fear. *God alone leads to success.*

Then, He created the creatures and made some of them beneficial to others, even though He took no benefit from it because He is independent. The same applies to harmful things. Likewise, He commands and prohibits certain things so one thing can benefit others, and He commanded to avoid the harmful. In addition, He has commanded people to do beneficial things. Likewise, He has created them and determined useful things for them, forbidding them from harmful things. *God alone leads to success.*

Again, from the perspective of wisdom, there must be command and prohibition. For God created humanity in the best stature, putting all that is on the face of the earth as well as the blessings of the earth and the sky at his service, and did not give him this as a reward or to fulfill a prior debt.[718] Reason does not find it appropriate to give such blessings to those who are not aware of them because that would be a waste and injustice to the blessings. Rather, people need to know the giver of blessings through it [i.e., the reception of blessings], thus knowing the one who deserves love and obligates thankfulness, which renders the test necessary. He added to that the promise and the threat, so that desire and fear would be completed. *God alone leads to success.*

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[717] Al-Māturīdī rejects the opponent's comparison between the purpose for the human institution of a test and that for God. The phrase used, *ikhtilāf al-mumtaḥinayn/al-mumtaḥanayn*, therefore seems a dual construction pointing to the difference between the one who is testing (i.e., God), and the tested (humanity), rather than to the differences amongst various people who are tested. This reading is alluded to in TA, 248, n. 11.

[718] In contrast to the view of the Muʿtazila. See 6.1.

Then, reason sees truth and justice as good, and injustice and falsehood as bad. Thus, the first group [i.e., truth and justice] are seen as great and noble in the hearts, while the second [i.e., injustice and falsehood] are seen as despicable and contemptuous. So, reason commands the acquisition of that which raises one's honor and forbids that which degrades it. The [divine] command and prohibition, and then reward, is mandated on the basis of rational necessity to complete the honor for whoever chooses its path and fulfills its requirements, and to punish whoever prefers his desire to the counsel of reason.

What we have said requires accepting the necessity of the messengers because they show [people] the signs of justice and truth and the signs of their opposites [i.e., injustice and lies] by pointing to everything that is ambiguous in its nature.[719] Thus, [the action of the messengers] is in agreement with praiseworthy [human] states.[720] *God alone leads to success.*

Then, no rational person in the visible world is content to neglect his soul attending [to good due to] immersion in desires; on the contrary, everyone strives to to settle [his soul] with respect to what will not harm it and to attain a good end. [The nature of the soul] involves ignorance that will destroy one through that which he hopes will save him and will harm him where he wants it to benefit. This ignorance makes one need someone who knows the consequences of matters. Thus, one trains his soul according to [the messenger's] counsel and does not neglect [his soul][721] due to his desires. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[719] Lit. "its whatness" (*mā'iyyatuhu*).

[720] The previous paragraph establishes that the unaided human intellect is responsible for moral valuation. The present paragraph points out that there is need for the guidance of messengers in matters that are ambiguous and so cannot be determined by intellect alone.

[721] This rendering of the *hā'* in *yuhmilahā* is favored due to the same phraseology at the beginning of the paragraph. It is also possible that it refers to the messenger's "counsel" (*ishāra*).

3) Then, let us return to arguing with one who accepts monotheism and believes in [God's] command and prohibition, but rejects messengerhood for the reasons he has mentioned.[722] The proofs that I have mentioned regarding [the necessity of] divine commands and prohibitions linked to the need for messengerhood are sufficient for one who is healthy in his psyche.

i) Then we say: It is obligatory to accept messengerhood as a rational necessity [for two reasons]:

a) The need for it in terms of religious and worldly life.

b) Or, if reason makes humanity independent [of messengerhood], it still must be accepted in terms of being a favor from God. Worldly affairs rest on the same foundation that religion does. For example, [God] created humanity and made them beings subject to a test. With the water He sent down from the sky, He brought forth from the earth food and medicine for [people]. Then he brought forth from it diseases and deadly poisons. He made their intellects dislike the idea of being tested [to try everything] on one's own in order to know the harmful from the nutritious. For in this case, one who tries [e.g., a poisonous plant] may die. On the other hand, the intellect does not know how to reach this knowledge.[723] Therefore, it is necessary to believe in one [i.e., the messenger] through whom God informs [man] of every substance [in terms of edibility], so that they live on what their bodies consume, and their religion will be elevated by it.

Then, initially, reason is not acquainted with the varieties of agriculture and its management. After completing [the growth of crops] and knowledge of their substance, they need one who teaches how to process [and cook the crops] to make them suitable for consumption, because the process of making each one suitable [for eating] is different. Then, there have been put in food various harms from which one who enjoys it will suffer if he does not abide by its limits. For [the messenger] is one who teaches the limits [of food] and, if it harms someone, the amount of remedy that wards off the harm. Next, [he teaches] the sciences of medicine, along with the differences of the natures and the use of deadly poisons. This is so people come to know the beneficial amount [of food] to sustain the body.[724]

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[722] Reading *dhakara* with MS. 92r or *dhakara*[*hā*] with K, 179.

[723] In other words, one cannot safely reach this knowledge by experience, nor at all by the mind alone (*Translator*).

In addition, [people need messengers in the following areas]: various kinds of professions that meet their needs for covering, sheltering, and protection from heat and cold; difficult beasts that were created for [human beings], but no one who lives amongst them knows for what benefit they were created, whether they were created for use at all, or how to train [these animals], because they all naturally bolt from [people], until they submit and are led; then, in different kinds of trade on which their religion and world rely; then, about the distribution of their needs within various lands, which neither their nature nor their intellects direct them to, or explain for them where to seek them; then, about the knowledge of the paths to [their needs] because the intellect can neither point to these places nor the paths to them; then, in acquaintance with the languages through which one lives and understands the afterlife; then, in knowing the names that if they were not known, no need would be understood and no one would know their place; then, in the aspects that cause reproduction and the knowledge of raising children; and then, in the discipline of processing food that would never [otherwise] be attained.

Thereupon, through the emergence of creatures learning, one from another, languages, names, professions, medicine, all arts, the paths of lands, the training of beasts and how to use them, all the things that I have mentioned are clear evidence that their basis is not the derivation of reasoning but teaching and counsel.[725] *God alone leads to success.*

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[724] So, according to al-Māturīdī, the messengers are the founders of agriculture, gastronomy, medicine and nutrition (*Translator*).

[725] Al-Māturīdī here argues that the fundamental role of messengerhood, to guide the people to respond to God's commands and prohibitions, can only be fulfilled by their comprehensive counsel for all the preliminary human needs for survival and flourishing in the world. In other words, since it is God's wisdom for human beings to endure and not to perish, it is also His wisdom to send messengers to help ensure this outcome. Like the *falāsifa* of his time, al-Māturīdī is invested in explicating the societal role played by prophetic revelation. There are parallels with the works of al-Kindī and with Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) in his *Views of the People of the Virtuous City*. See Adamson and Pormann, *The Philosophical Works of al-Kindī*, 286-87, and Rudolph, "Reflections on al-Fārābī's *Mabādi' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*."

In addition, it is a common experience that when people mutually panic during disasters or important events, since some of them are more knowledgeable than others, they take help from each other's opinions and act in consultation. Then, [one may mention] the teaching of literary disciplines and the learning of various sciences by all people through reading books and listening to sages. This shows that people do not refuse help from others due to seeing their own intellects as sufficient, and do not neglect to meet their needs collectively. So, it is rationally necessary to turn to a veracious adviser because people believe that the sciences come to them on their tongues. Religion and worldly affairs are based on this, as is the science of magic. [The science of] treating the substance of things [i.e., alchemy] and the science of fighting the enemies of [one's] religion and wealth [i.e., military arts] have been entirely derived from the tongues [of others]. Their beginning has been through the teaching of the Omniscient and Wise.

One of the things that mandates accepting messengerhood as a rational necessity is that one has already rationally affirmed the good of knowing and being grateful to the bestower of blessings, and the evil of denying Him and being ungrateful for His blessing. Then, there is nothing that one of a person's senses comes across except that it comes across it for the sake of God in the good health of [that] sense, such that [all] those which are perceived as blessings cannot be encompassed.

ii) After that, we can say two more things [about the rational necessity of messengerhood]:

a) Those who give blessings differ in deserving gratitude, and there are differing values of blessings, the end of which none but their creator can know. Accordingly, no intellect other than [the creator of blessings] can know exactly how to give thanks for blessings. Therefore, it is necessary to have one [i.e., a messenger] to inform the intellect about whom these blessings have come from.

b) These blessings are divided among the senses and affect each and every one of them. Therefore, each organ should be used to give its due thanks for the blessings. In addition, if you want to appreciate the blessings, think about the case of one who has had something wrong with one of his organs. Perhaps this person would not mind if he spent the whole world to get his organ healthy. Then, how to pay gratitude with every organ may not be known through reason. Therefore, one who reports from God [the knowledge of how to give this gratitude] should be accepted.

In addition, God has created man in such a way that he can use all his organs. For example, people grasp things with their flexible joints, drop, give, take, and change according to differing states and extending to various actions. If the physical structure of man was not for the use of all these organs in worshiping, He would have made the power of action and utility [in his physical structure] restricted as is the case with beasts and birds. Thus, it has been established that [man] has been created for worship, and there must be one [i.e., a messenger] who can explain the nature of worship in every organ.[726]

Then, the principle in this matter – of what mandates the need for messengers as rationally necessary – is manifold:

Disagreements clearly arise between people because everyone claims that he possesses the truth and is foremost in being right. There is consensus on the absence of someone to take refuge in to judge between them and make them see that which will reconcile their hearts and bring them to an agreement. As is known, conflict is the root of every corruption and the prelude to every destruction, all of which is rationally abhorrent. Therefore, the conclusion of reason is to turn to one who will help them and enable them to reach the benefits and knowledge created for themselves. It is well known that there is no one who knows these things better than the one who created [the intellect]. All this requires acceptance of a messenger whom we know to have been sent by Him.[727] *God alone leads to success.*

Another evidence [that messengers are rationally necessary] is that it is known that knowledgeable people differ in perceiving what is useful for their religious and worldly affairs; what one knows about that benefit, another may not. Since this has been established, we cannot discount that there may be things that God knows to be of benefit for His servants, but that His creatures do not. Therefore, He conveys these things to people through His messengers. *Grace is from God.*

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[726] There is a possible connection here to the hadith, "In the human being are three-hundred and sixty joints for which one must pay alms..." Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan, al-Adab*, 173.

[727] This is a restatement of the argument presented in al-Māturīdī's Introduction.

Another proof is that the command is either based on the urging of one's intellect or obligated on some of humanity from what has been pointed out by another with a superior intellect. If the first option is true, it is necessary to reconcile between the intellects and say that it will be correct that everyone adopts his own view. This means that followers of every religion who rely on their own intellect will be correct, which is impossible due to the conflict of views and teachings. If the second option is true, then someone's intellect will become like a messenger who brings [people the correct view] from God. Thus, that needs evidence informing us of his person [i.e., the one who has the superior intellect]. Then, there is no difference between the evidence proving that [the messenger] is truthful in what he reports from God and [proving] someone's correctness in every matter he speaks from his intellect.[728] *God alone leads to success.*

In addition, it is known that preoccupations and distractions in the intellect confuse [people]. Likewise, anxieties, various innate human characteristics, kinds of pain, and countless causes occupy the mind regarding small or big issues and prevent it from encompassing the truth. Also, [people are distracted by] the domination of desires, and the abundance of expectations and pleasures. Because of [all] these, there must be a messenger of God who will explain and indicate to them the truth when there is doubt. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iii) We have explained, with praise to God, the rational need for the messengers, belief in them, and the incapacity of reason to encompass everything. The principle in this matter has two aspects:

a) God Most High has made an organ to perceive every object of perception. Then, each [organ] encompasses [its objects in perception] by its essence without [further] means connected to it.

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[728] This argument takes aim at the person who thinks that only the intellect and not messages from God should be used to convey rightly guided action. Al-Māturīdī grants the opponent's framing of the question, pointing out that one either follows one's own intellect or uses it to rely on another. The former case is dismissed, since it leads to chaos. Yet in the latter case the kind of rational evidence to verify who possesses a superior intellect that ought to be followed is the same kind of evidence that verifies the genuine messenger from God, so the objection fails.

b) Then, however, [it is possible] some impairments appear, such that one must remove them with the support of assistants and protect [the organ] from the opposites that prevent its performance. Thus, one observes [the object of perception] through the right [function] of perception, knowing that [the fact that the object to be seen] is too distant and too small prevents the organ of perception from working properly. The same is the case with the intellect because it is a created means and limited like other means of perception, with the [same impairments] that appear for those others. Uncertainty and obscurity of things also [prevents the intellect from perceiving]. The subject matter of [the intellect] is reflection upon means [of knowledge]. The highest of these is that which has been heard from the words of the sages, and the truest of the people is the one who has a proof for his wisdom [i.e., the messenger with a miracle].[729] *Strength comes from God alone.*

iv) Another evidence is as follows: God, whose praise is exalted, has made two kinds of means through which everything that lies beyond the senses is perceived:

a) Inference from that which is visible to the unseen when they are connected. This is like the connection of smoke to fire, light to the sun, and the effect of action to the agent, for instance writing and building [i.e., connected to the writer and builder respectively].[730]

b) The report informing about the state of [the unseen]: distant lands, changed states and occurring events are such unseen things. This is known to all rational beings. Through this [i.e., reports], the human being can learn about genera, divisions, and kinds, [such as:] medical and linguistic fields, sciences of manufacture and war, etc. Then, we know the command and the prohibition, and the promise and the threat [through reports]. Things whose evidence is not sensible, such as the permissible and the prohibited, as well as the customs that are related to all kinds of states must be known through reports. Therefore, the necessity of believing reports on such matters should be accepted, which requires accepting messengerhood.

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[729] See the discussion of the different valid means of knowledge in 1.2.

[730] See 2.3 (3).

Then, three principles are the impossible, the necessary and [what is in the] middle, that is, the possible. The verdict of the whole world is decided according to these threefold criteria. So, what the intellect deems necessary cannot be otherwise in the [revealed] reports. The same is the case with the impossible [i.e., what the intellect sees as impossible cannot occur in the reports any other way]. As for the possible, the reports may be otherwise because of [their] possible changes from state to state, from hand to hand, and from ownership to ownership. The intellect neither sees [the possible] as obligatory in one respect nor forbidden in another. Thus, the messengers bring the foremost clarification of [the possible] in every state. *God alone leads to success.*

4) As for what is said about miracles [i.e., when it comes to comparing miracles to the feats of oracles, magicians and illusionists], every miracle has a well-known sign and a clear indication. Furthermore, it is false to oppose [the truth of the messenger on the ground of the unreliability of reports] because one either deems true the report of [at least] one person, in which case the same question is asked of him [i.e., the doubter in reports is asked why he cannot accept true the report of the messenger], or one does not accept anything as true, in which case the report he gives about himself [i.e., as he says he does not believe in anything] is false. The objection that the perception made by the senses is sometimes incorrect is more obvious than this argument [i.e., the rejection of reports]. But it has not become necessary to negate sensory knowledge due to this objection. So why is [this argument] required? As for [the objection] on account of one being in other than the era of the messengers, that is a statement about the acceptance of reports that has [already] been forced upon him, so that he is compelled to [accept] them and his effort is in vain.[731]

Then, the following statement [of one who denies messengerhood] is debated: "[The one who calls to messengerhood] is someone whom the intellect forbids from praise." A truth for whoever takes this [statement] as knowledge is that the intellect or nature obligates that he regards everything [i.e., good and bad] according to what his soul inclines to and what his nature dislikes. Thus, rulings are reversed from their realities, and it is revealed that his judgments arise from his ignorance of reason. The duty of such a person is to know the reality of reason, to invalidate his ruling, and to be angry with himself for failing to distinguish reason from whim.[732] *God alone leads to success.*

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[731] This paragraph revisits arguments made in 1.2.2 and 1.3.2 about the validity of testimony as a means of knowledge. In summary, the skeptic must accept at least their own report on pain of a performative self-contradiction. Yet, if in principle at least one report is acceptable, then there is no basis to rule out the possibility of the messenger bringing revealed knowledge via testimony.

Then, even if the intellect is independent [from needing a messenger], it is possible that [God] sends messengers as an act of favoring because He is known to be characterized with benevolence – His servants are at home in [favor]. When God Most High bestows blessings upon His servants, He gives them extras in terms of adornments and beauty; for example, the two ears, two eyes and other organs of the body that are more than one are like this.[733] Then, in the abundance of blessings and proofs He created for monotheism and messengerhood, even if there was sufficiency without them; again in the abundance of fruits and delicious foods, even though a small amount of them is sufficient [there is evidence for Him to send a messenger out of benevolence, even if reason is sufficient without one].

Moreover, even if reason is sufficient, it meets a limit in that [i.e., determining the matters of religion].[734] [There must be] cooperation – by consulting the people of reflection on the issues that God has specified for [those people] and removed obscurity for them – and much exhaustive inquiry by which every effort is spent. Therefore, sending messengers makes people's work easier and lighter, which is a great blessing. To be ungrateful for such [a blessing] indicates the stupidity of men and their ignorance to consider blessings as troubles. In addition, there are distractions for the intellects and desires of the souls that cloud reason. Thus, sending a messenger is a help and a guide for people, which is something that the intellects naturally love. In addition, [sending a messenger] serves as a reminder, a warning and a caution for purpose [of those] falling short. Hence, [the messenger] encourages reflection, calls to think and to use the intellect. This is well known in all worldly affairs and political matters. One also should consider the fact that whim has been set against reason. Whim has been given supporters from amongst expectations and desires, as well as devils who make them [i.e., the desires] look adorned. Thus, how can it be denied that the intellect is also given supporters? The most deserving of them in that are the messengers.

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[732] The one who rejects the messenger makes the mistake of reasoning only by that which accords with their desires.

[733] Possibly the meaning is that though the servants could suffice with just one of these organs, they were given two as a favor. Alternatively, the intent may be that pairs of organs are symmetrical and hence more beautiful as adornment.

[734] The Arabic is *"fa-huwa yasudduhu al-ḥadd fī dhālika"*. An alternative is to read the text as *"fa-huwa yusaddidu al-khabar fī dhālika"*, rendering, "Reports guide him in that". The former fits better with the remainder of the paragraph (*Translator*).

One should add the following: While all the tendencies of whim are visible and sensorial, all the means of righteous behavior are invisible. As a matter of fact, the reminder [for humanity] consists of remembering the [otherworldly] reward and punishment and the command to abandon desires and pleasures. This is something difficult for human nature and whim. For this reason, it is necessary to seek help from someone whose vision reminds them of the afterlife, and they are informed about the Hereafter by what is within it in terms of ease and hardship. Thus, that [seeking help] takes place as sensory knowledge, so it is easy upon human nature, as what is suitable for nature is easy. *God alone leads to success.*

Another aspect of the principle in this is the existence of the messengers with what is with them of evidence and proofs. All the deniers of the messengers know that not one of them has evidence to prove the falsehood of [the messenger] or to remove from himself the quality of obstinacy. However, they have many tricks in the face of their evidence, and they sometimes try to defame them with magic and in [other] ways. Although they have spent all their means and worldly lives in trying to extinguish their light, all they see is the superiority and victory [of the messengers]. In fact, God has rendered all people dependent on those who believe in the messengers because they have recognized by what they know in general that [the believers in the messengers] are independent in their [business] affairs. Thus, [the disbelievers] hope that their [own] affairs will improve, and they will be in unity.[735] The same is the case with the politics of worldly kings.[736]

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[735] The idea seems to be that even disbelievers who are opposed to the believers cannot deny their economic effectiveness and only hope for the same unity in their own affairs.

[736] The rulers use religion as a means of maintaining order and authority (*Translator*). They have also been known to adopt Islam for the benefits that it confers upon them, a state of affairs relevant to al-Māturīdī's Transoxianan context.

It is impossible for citizens to survive without a law that they are obliged to implement and a foundation to build upon. Such [a society] needs to be governed by one who knows that when [God] created them, He also made for them a way to live in peace. *Strength comes from God alone.*

5) Let us now consider some of al-Warrāq's[737] words about the miraculous signs brought by the messengers that prove the belief in monotheism:

i) "[The messengers] did not test people's powers, nor did they know the natures of the world that they rely upon in their actions. On the contrary, they failed to reach the knowledge of most of [the people]. So how can [the messengers] know the extent of tricks with [their limited knowledge]?[738] Is what they see anything except a jester who astonishes people? Has any magic occurred other than the attraction of iron by a magnetized stone?"[739]

a) Al-Warrāq is answered as follows: Have you attained what you are saying [that is, knowledge of natural science and illusion] yourself so that you know whether your words are a justified criticism or a distortion of the truth? No matter which he says, it is an initial response to [his interlocutor].[740]

b) Another answer is as follows: If what he says [i.e., the claimed miracle] was present in the substance of the world, then it would not be possible for it to arise [as a miracle] from the stone. For a specific thing is preserved in its own name: it is improbable due to the remoteness of miracles and the specification of that [miracle] from the [thing's] substance in the extraordinary case. That situation necessitates that what the messenger brings is specific to him, because it is for him that it leaves its essence at the time of his claim [to messengerhood]. As we have already explained, [the messenger] grew up among people possessing a [human] nature, so these people know that the like of [the miracle that the messenger] comes with is impossible for the substance of the human being."[741]

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[737] Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq was a third/ninth-century rationalist who thought that all divine commandments could be derived using reason, and who denied the miracles of the messengers. See van Ess, *Theology and Society, Vol. 4*, 326-27.

[738] So, what the messengers call miracles are actually phenomena that can be realized with knowledge of physical laws and techniques of illusion. However, since the messenger's knowledge of physics and illusion is not sufficient, he thinks they are miracles (*Translator*).

[739] See van Ess, *Theology and Society, Vol. 4*, 372-73.

[740] This is because if he says that he has that knowledge of the natures of the world, this undermines his claim that the messengers failed to attain it. If he says that he does not have it, then this undermines his claim that it is merely common knowledge.

c) Then, many of the miracles from [the messengers] are of kinds that are not possible to know from studying the substance of the earth; they are only possible if one who knows its substance discloses it. In this is [the explanation] of what [al-Warrāq] mentions.[742] Even if there were not miracles, the people of every true prophet have witnessed the signs of truth on him that necessitate them to accept his claim [of prophethood].

d) Then, it is said [to al-Warrāq]: Are you one of those who accept the reports in the world [as a means of knowledge]? If he says, "Yes", he is asked to bring clearer proof for his truth than those of the messengers. This requires accepting what I have already mentioned [that is, the truth of miracles]. If he says "No", reason and everything else that he accepts as evidence will testify that he is lying.

e) Ibn al-Rāwandī[743] opposed [al-Warrāq] as follows: If one claims to have a nature that allows him to talk to the planets, or if he claims to have a thing which if he sets up against the Sun, its light disappears, or if it touches the sea, it emits everything in it, or if it touches his foot, he flies in the air and rises to the sky and rains as a cloud, then since [according to al-Warrāq] denial is required despite what [the messenger] claims about leaving the known natures, the same [is true] for the first case [i.e., this claimant].[744]

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[741] Even when occurring to physical things in the world, miracles are in reality an exception to the normal human natures of the messengers that perform them. See Harvey and Jalajel, "Al-Māturīdī's Divine Action Model: A Distinctive Account of Causality" (forthcoming).

[742] This is the answer to the challenge that miracles are nothing more than advanced knowledge of the world. Rather, they include knowledge that is not available through any other means.

[743] Ibn al-Rāwandī (d. 245/860) was a theologian from Khurāsān with a Murji'ī background who studied and then fell out with the Baghdadī Mu'tazila. Al-Māturīdī seems unaffected by the negative image that developed around his name and is happy to use his polemics against al-Warrāq to advance his enquiry into messengerhood. See the comments in the Editor's Introduction and Stroumsa, *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam*, 37-46.

[744] Al-Warrāq's argument is that the messengers have insufficiently tested the people with their miracles, which are merely natural phenomena. Ibn al-Rāwandī thus mentions an extreme case of this, which clearly falls outside of the usual natures of the world. Al-Warrāq is left in the absurd position of having to claim that all such marvels are explainable through natural processes or tricks.

In addition, the one who denies has nothing, while the other [i.e., the messenger] has something that has been rejected on the basis of conjecture and probability, a thing through which an unseen truth can be possible. Yet, the proof [of the miracle] is self-evident, so it must be accepted.

ii) As evidence about the messengers, [Ibn al-Rāwandī] mentioned to al-Warrāq the fact that people do not see each human being die, but that they agree on the mortality of people due to the report of the prophets, speaking of the existence of consensus on this issue.[745]

a) Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said:

I) Al-Warrāq knows that he has not seen anything, nor has anything come to his knowledge [on this topic].

II) Secondly, he made his evidence in this matter dependent on the severe trial [of death itself], which disappears [i.e., as a source of evidence].

III) Third, since it cannot be attained by thought [that all human beings are mortal], it has been established that this idea has been reached by [the report of] the prophets.[746]

b) [Al-Warrāq] said the following about the arguments of philosophy: "The composition of the animal is a mortal composition."

I) Behold his stupidity! He utters this phrase after a people [that is, the philosophers] who perceived this truth through the messengers, if they perceived it at all, and then he denies the belief of the messengers along with their proof.

II) Second, [al-Warrāq] has not tested the intellects of all philosophers; nor have the philosophers tested the natures of the whole world.

III) Third, if it was dependent on composition, the amount of lifespan of living things would not vary.

c) [Al-Warrāq] said: The soul, by its nature, does not seek to ward off [death] and does not hope to overcome it.

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[745] In this section, al-Māturīdī builds on Ibn al-Rāwandī's defence of the messengers to al-Warrāq based on the mortality of all people. This truth is said to not be knowable via the senses or reflection, but only by the knowledge revealed to messengers.

[746] This may be a reference to Q. 3:185 and Q. 21:35: "Every soul will taste death."

I) The answer one should give to [al-Warrâq] is that he has not tested the natures of all things [therefore, he cannot make such a judgment].

II) Secondly, [the souls] became tranquil about [death] by inheriting it from the words of the messengers.

III) Third, the miracles of the messengers are not attempted except with difficulty to bring forth their like. And this proceeds according to the possibility of the attempt: there is what is not attempted despite censure and challenge [e.g., matching the Qur'an], and there is what it is not possible to ever attempt, such as splitting the moon.[747]

iii) Then, the following is said to [al-Warrāq]: "Do you believe in anything?" If he says "No", he not only disbelieves in his denial [of the messengers], but also disbelieves that he is himself, and that he is either dead or alive. Hence, it is a mistake to make the effort to answer and oppose him. If [al-Warrāq] says, "Yes", one says to him: Perhaps your reason for believing [that the messengers are liars] is that your power of perceiving and knowing things did not attain the conduit [of correct knowledge], since you have seen that the beliefs of many believers are false. Perhaps your nature has shown you that corruption [in the belief of others]. However, of natures, it is possible that there is a pure nature that perceives what you believe [i.e., about the messengers] in the same way, and your ignorance will be revealed [i.e., someone else perceives al-Warrāq to have corrupt beliefs]. Everything that he says is an answer to all that he himself denies. The principle in [this matter] is that one who chooses[748] to leave what is known and spoken about in natures [e.g., the truthfulness of the messengers] for what does not exist [e.g., their lies], with nothing other than its non-existence or the possibility that it may exist [in the future], has absolutely canceled the means to affirm or negate a thing and is included in the category of skeptics in all statements.[749] *Strength comes from God alone.*

iv) In our opinion, there are two main aspects in the signs of the messengers:

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[747] See under 5.5 (2).

[748] Reading *istakhāra* with K, 188.

[749] The argument is that al-Warrāq's denial of the messengers' truthfulness is a baseless skepticism that should not be entertained.

a) The states of [the messengers] appear such as to remove doubts from the intellect and to reject imagined suspicions from them. Since people were together with [the messengers] both when they were young and in adulthood, and they observed them as clean, pure and pious in society. It is impossible to regard [the people the messengers lived among] as equal to them [in virtue], and their upbringing could not have achieved it. This is because the states of the prophets were open to [their communities], and they were alongside them when they were settled and dispersed [in the land]. Therefore, it is known intuitively that this is thanks to the protection of [God], who knew that He would raise [His messenger] to a high station and entrust him with the unseen and [its] secrets. This is something that the nature tends to accept, and reason accepts all the affairs [of the messenger]. If one denies this, he has denied it despite knowing and because of obstinacy. Therefore, this attitude of his is either due to the fact that he has been accustomed and inclined to the contrary of this, or for the sake of the honor and fame he will gain in his worldly life, or because of some of his expectations and achievements. Otherwise, every heart inclines towards even those with a lower rank and position. *Strength comes from God alone.*

b) The second is the coming of miracles, which are outside the nature of the people of insight in that subject, the like of which is impossible to strive for or to attain their essence through study. Moreover, even if it were possible for one to attain them through study and exhaustive effort, the messengers, considering their origins and how they were raised, did not do that. It is clear that God benefited and honored them with [miracles] because He made them responsible for His revelation. In addition, [the messengers] have some qualities by which they are superior to magicians. The origin of the science of magic is from the heaven, but people forgot its origin and transmitted it through study.[750] The same holds true of all ways of earning, professions and crafts. Whoever has been honored [by knowledge] in a way other than the method followed in the sciences knows that this [i.e., their messengerhood] has been assigned a great work.

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[750] See al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt al-qur'ān*, 1:190-92, commenting on the story of Hārūt and Mārūt in Q. 2:102.

On the other hand, [the messengers] have some qualities that indicate that they were sent [by God]:

I) These [qualities] emerge in reality and endure with the messenger's [disposition]. In contrast, magic is something that attracts attention and then fades away.

II) The miracle of the messengers is such that one who is not a messenger can neither claim it nor remain with it. If it were an aspect of magic, this would not be the case.

III) Those who try to display wondrous things through learning incline towards something that, if it were real, they would no longer need worldly goods. Thus, this is evidence that they are liars.

IV) The messengers have undertaken what their souls dislike. They restrain the souls from pleasures and desires, and preserve them from those who may help attain the glory and honor of the world, and to call others to abandon these for the sake of God.

V) When they were weak and they had few supporters, they risked their lives, stood up to tyrants by disrupting what they held against them, and showed them power from [God] the Almighty. This is despite knowing how [tyrants] do evil to their dissenters, especially those who they fear will break up their unity and scatter their affairs.

Again, [the messengers] call to that which is rationally clear, politically good, and on which the religious and worldly benefits of people depend. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Likewise, [the messengers] did not show any deficiencies in anything they called to through their personal intellectual effort. It has not been reported that they showed slackness in any of their works, no evil was known in their morality, and they were described at the highest level by the following good moral qualities: generosity, courage, moral virtues, showing mercy and compassion to creatures, attaching no value to the world, and bearing people's injustice and more. Inclination is shown to one who is possessed of only one of these virtues, and they are elevated because of the place of that virtue. So, how about one who gathers these good virtues in himself and fulfills them well in the name of God, whose praise is lofty, and who patiently endures the unpleasant things that befall him. [These unpleasantries] make it possible for one to become free of some aspects of hypocrisy.

In addition, some ends were promised in the person of [the messengers] and it was informed that the affairs would return to them, and eventually it occurred as it was promised. The following has also been said about them: When one looks to one of [the messengers] in respect and admiration and listens to his advice for himself, he sees the truth in his words. On the other hand, if one follows and then opposes him after learning something from him, this is because he favors the world over the Hereafter and falsehood over the truth.

[5.2. Proofs for the Messengerhood of Muḥammad, may God bless him]

All the proofs that I have mentioned [regarding messengerhood] are also valid for Muḥammad, may God bless him. In addition, there are other miracles that show his prophethood and that he is the seal of the prophets, which have survived until now. One of them is the Qur'an with which he challenged all disbelievers to produce the like of it with the help of jinn and human beings. No one other than the fool condemned by his people because of his ignorance has attempted it. In addition, the ruling of all events that will occur until the Day of Judgment has been explained in [the Qur'an]. Hence, it is known that it has come from the one who knows the unseen and what will happen forever. Good news came to [the Prophet] that he would conquer countries and would make his religion superior amongst the followers of other religions. [The Qur'an] contains reports about events that happened in the past. People knew that [the Prophet] did not visit anyone who knew about [these historical events] and he did not look at any book so that [the meaning of] those verses would be retained by him. Also, the characteristics of [the Prophet] were described in the revealed books. He contended with the People of the Book, and they could not deny him, as they were fearing for themselves [from God]. On the contrary, [the Prophet] called the People of the Book to mutually invoke curses [on the wrongdoers, saying] to the Jews, "Then long for death"[751] and to the Christians, "Come! We will summon our sons and your sons..."[752], and saying to all of them, "So (try to) circumvent me, all of you, give me no respite."[753] [The Prophet's] safety from them and his reliance on God was made clear by His statement: "God will protect you from the people."[754]

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[751] Q. 2:94.

Additionally, in the physical constitution of [the Prophet], there are signs [for his messengerhood]. There is the light that passed down from one generation to another until it appeared in him, and the seal between his two shoulder blades. Although he was described as being of medium height, he would appear taller than two tall people when he was between them. Then, before revelation came to him, a cloud overshadowed him. Then, his belly was cut open and – as is known – the inside was washed and put back in its place. Then, although his people were very fond of worshiping idols, he did not do so in his childhood. And when [his uncle] al-ʿAbbās asked God for rain with him [as a means of intercession], it rained. His treatment of the disbelievers was neither to flatter them nor to quarrel with them. [The Prophet] was neither obscene nor clamorous. No one ever reproached him for lying and even his enemies described him [as a truthful person]. They differed with him because of the verses that came down later, so they called him a magician, an oracle, poet, and so on. This would not have happened except due to the plenitude of his verses. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[5.3. Al-Warrāq's Criticism of the Qur'an]

Then, al-Warrāq criticized those who used the Qur'an to argue [for the Prophet's messengerhood] in the following ways:

1) [The Arabs] had different degrees in terms of eloquence. Perhaps [the Qur'an] is a composition of the most eloquent of them.

2) Since they were busy with wars, [they could not find the opportunity to produce the like of the Qur'an].

3) They are not a nation of reflection and knowledge. Do you not see that they were blocked from achieving it despite abundant possession of the means for it according to the adherents of the doctrine of necessary

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752 Q. 3:61.
753 Q. 11:55.
754 Q. 5:67.

knowledge, and from reflection and knowledge despite the means for acquiring it according to the adherents of the doctrine of acquired knowledge.[755]

4) Only one specific member of the community had power [to compose the Qur'an], but without this requiring a special position for him. The same is the case with prophethood. Or they did have the power of thinking and choice, but they did not bother to do so.

1) The first criticism may be answered as follows:

i) If the case had been as [al-Warrāq] argued [i.e., that the Qur'an could not be matched because it was written by the most eloquent Arab], they would have given up on it after trying. However, the fact that they never attempted it shows that they naturally gave up [and thought it impossible].

ii) Again, if it were [as al-Warrāq said], then the like of it [i.e., the Qur'an] in His statement, "Verily, though mankind and the jinn should assemble [to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof though they were helpers one of another]"[756] cannot possibly result from the linguistic knowledge of any human being attaining to that [level].[757]

iii) Since [the Prophet] was born and grew up amongst them and learned the language with them, had he not received a special [degree of eloquence] from God in that which was not given to other than him, it would not have been possible for another to reach this station.

iv) [The Arabs, specifically the Quraysh,] tried to give responses to the leading tribes in the art [of poetry], such that they worked on an ode for one year.[758] If they possessed the capacity [to write the like of the Qur'an] or if they hoped to do it in various ways, they would certainly not abstain from doing it as this was a humiliation for their people. In fact, they spent their lifeblood and worldly possessions to extinguish this light.

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[755] The more unusual group here is that which al-Māturīdī characterizes as "adherents of the doctrine of necessary knowledge". In other words, those who do not think that reflection is needed to attain knowledge. The likely targets are Mu'tazilī figures, such as al-Jāḥiẓ. In the words of al-Ka'bī, he was distinguished by "the doctrine that knowledge is due to nature (*al-ma'rifa ṭibā'*), and despite being an action of the knower, it is not according to his free choice (*wa-laysa bi-ikhtiyār lahu*)." Al-Balkhī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt*, 167.

[756] Q. 17:88.

[757] The point seems to be that if the Qur'an was merely the production of the most eloquent of the Arabs, it would not have been possible to have credibly sustained its challenge to all human and jinn to produce its like.

[758] That is, the *Mu'allaqāt*, which were hung on the Ka'ba.

2) [Al-Warrāq's] second criticism [i.e., the excuse that since the Arabs were engaged in war, they did not have the opportunity to produce the like of the Qur'an] is impossible in the way he mentions, because that would have spared them from spending their lives [in war]. They were given close to twenty years before war began. Also, the [Qur'an's statement] contains a rebuke [and challenge not only to the Arabs, but also] to the jinn and the human beings [and they are not all in war]. Moreover, only one group of people fought [i.e., the rest could have attempted to match the Qur'an because they were not busy fighting]. Then, the war did not prevent them from answering what they heard from the Messenger of God [and producing the like of] the Qur'an. In the same way, [they could have tried to do it] had they possessed the ability.

3) The [answer to al-Warrāq's] third [criticism of the Qur'an that the Arabs are an ignorant and thoughtless nation]: If [al-Warrāq's] claim was true, they would have met [the challenge of the Qur'an] with contestation and rebuttal,[759] as had been customary, not with submission and denial. For the Arabs are the smartest and most ardent people, and the poets used to counter each other with poetry. Then, the [Qur'anic] rebuke addressed all human beings and jinn: its affair has spread to every horizon. Also, [God] who brought [the Prophet] to [challenge them] with what he brought with him [i.e., the Qur'an] made him grow up among them. If [the Prophet] possessed knowledge and reflection despite growing up among them [i.e., assuming the Arabs were ignorant and thoughtless], then that too is his miracle. *Strength comes from God alone.*

4) The answer to [al-Warrāq's] fourth [criticism of the Qur'an, that is, only one of the Arabs was brilliant, and he wrote the Qur'an]:

i) If God Most High singles someone out for a power, no one shares it with him due to Him preventing such a person from verbally claiming prophecy, just as He prevents one who seizes the magnetized stone [from claiming prophecy]. If He knows that the other in question will claim [prophecy], He does not give him [that power, which will lead people astray].[760]

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[759] Reading *bi-al-inkār wa-l-daf'* with MS. 99v and K, 192.

[760] So, the singularity of the Prophet in bringing the Qur'an points to it as a divine miracle.

ii) Secondly, if one has an additional power that others do not have, another will definitely try to gain something more perfect than that [power] or to perform an act of the same kind in keeping with his own power. The evidence for this is human actions that emerge from nature.[761] Then, had [the Prophet] an extra power that he had used [for writing the Qur'an] that achievement would not be native to them nor belong to them since its like is not found in any of [their] affairs.[762] This indicates that He gave that power to [the Prophet] to be a sign for His speech. We will discuss the summary of these interpretations after finishing with his [i.e., al-Warrāq's] sections.

iii) [Al-Warrāq's claim that the challenge to produce the like of the Qur'an] was sudden is [false because the deniers] were granted respite.[763] Moreover, no man, even one with an additional power, can know [all the questions] that are asked of him. In fact, the deniers took the trouble to compose poems, then they declared war, gathering supporters and spending wealth, then they fought with their friends and embarked in terrible things [trying to stop the Prophet]. If they were able to produce the like of the Qur'an, it would have been easier for them to do it [than all the things mentioned]. Then, [the disbelievers] were called to produce a sura, even as little as three verses. If doing it were within human capacity, an hour from the day would suffice for it.

[5.4. Ibn al-Rāwandī's Argument for the Truth of Messengerhood and His Critique of al-Warrāq]

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: Ibn al-Rāwandī used the aforementioned matter [of the knowledge] of nutrients and poisons to argue for the truth of messengerhood.[764] He then said: It is imperative to adopt one of two approaches to reports: Either they should be absolutely rejected, which necessitates ignorance about past days, distant places and former events, or we accept mass transmission and that which it compels [us to believe]. Thus, the reports of the messengers are necessary according to it. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[761] Reading *min al-tibā'* with MS. 99V and K. 193. The meaning is that this phenomenon of competition can be observed within the context of the natural capacities of human beings and their activities, for instance in sports. Thus, the lack of attempts to match the Qur'an is not explainable on a naturalistic account.

[762] Al-Warrāq's argument is that the Prophet is merely the best at composing such a text. The response is that such a facility is alien to the Arabs and hence must come from elsewhere.

[763] A claim from al-Warrāq that the challenge was sudden is not clearly recorded in the text, but makes sense in light of (2), in which he argues that occupation in war prevented the Arabs from meeting it.

[764] That is, it is through the messengers with divine revelation and not through trial and

1) Then, let us summarize some explanations about the falsity of al-Warrāq's criticism of the arguments [for messengerhood] based on the Qur'an:

i) The composition [of the Qur'an] is not something foreign and contrived such that it leaves the custom of the Arabs. On the contrary, it has the sweetest vocabulary and most beautiful expression. The Arabs suffered many troubles in which they perished [fighting against the Prophet]. It is not conceivable that they would leave an easy matter [i.e., producing the like of the Qur'an according to their opinion], while they were challenged and rebuked, if they could keep their most beloved thing safe, their lives; and [it is not conceivable] that they would spend their lifeblood, despite their covetousness towards it, except due to it being clear to them that they were incapable of it, either naturally or as a test.[765]

ii) Second, [the Qur'an's] explanation of all those issues which had been known only by the scholars of the People of the Book. However, those who saw the Messenger of God knew that he never visited them [to learn from them] and never wrote a book with his hand, such that he could recall it. It has been established, then, that [his knowledge of the People of the Book] was from God Most High teaching it to him.

iii) Third, at the time when he was weak, his supporters were few, and his enemies were many, the Qur'an reported that he would conquer some regions, that people would enter the religion in waves, and that his religion would be superior to other religions. Then, the events took place just as the Qur'an reported. *God alone leads to success.*

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error, that humanity has learned to distinguish between the nutritious and the poisonous that must be avoided (*Translator*). See 5.1(3).

[765] This "test" (*imtiḥān*) may refer to theory of "averting" (*ṣarfa*), which is that the Arabs could have produced the like of the Qur'an naturally, but God miraculously turned them away from this course. See Martin, "The Role of the Basrah Mu'tazilah in Formulating the Doctrine of the Apologetic Miracle," 181.

iv) Fourth, God Most High has collected in the Qur'an the essentials of all the major events that will happen until the Day of Judgment. This indicates that He, who knows the unseen, informed [the Prophet] about the essentials of that.

v) Also, it is clear that the Qur'an is in harmony with the rest of God's scriptures and the explanation of the description of Muḥammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, and his community [in earlier scripture] as follows: "Those who follow the messenger, the unlettered prophet whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them...";[766] "Muḥammad is the Messenger of God...";[767] and "[Those unto whom We gave the Book] recognize (this revelation) as they recognize their sons..."[768] None of [the Jews or Christians] dared to contest or rebut this. Thus, it has been established that it is God, exalted is He, who has revealed these scriptures and that He has made all of them harmonious despite the differing times and distance of ages. This is so they will know that the Qur'an has been sent down by the one from whom the previous scriptures have come, that the one from whom the scriptures have come is eternal, and that His proof has and will remain the same in the previous and subsequent nations.

In addition, there is the aforementioned call to mutually invoke curses [on the wrongdoers]. Also, there are reports that he was asked about certain subjects, and his opinion was sought, so it was as he answered. According to the story of the jinn in the Qur'an, they have confirmed and testified that it is harmonious with the previous scriptures. *Protection is from God alone.*

The principle in this matter is that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, was sent in an age in which monotheism was unknown. Rather, people worshipped statues, idols and fires. The totality of the Qur'an that has been revealed to him is so successful [in terms of proving monotheism] that if all the monotheists in the world, both from the past and to the endless future, gathered and tried to produce the proofs [of the Qur'an], they would not be able to reach one-tenth of it, let alone encompass it in the time when a single monotheist was not to be found. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[766] Q. 7:157.

[767] Q. 48:29.

[768] Q. 48:29.

The Qur'an was revealed in parts over a period of more than twenty years; not all of them are of a single measure in terms of composition. But the parts are harmonious with one another. If [a book] like it had come from creatures, there would be inconsistency amongst [its parts. As this is not the case], it has been established that [the Qur'an] was sent down by the Knower of the Unseen. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) In addition to what we have set forth in affirming the messengerhood of Muḥammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, [Ibn al-Rāwandī] argues through His statement to the Jews: "Then long for death!"[769] in two ways:

i) The promise that if they wished for death, they would indeed die.

ii) The fact that they would never wish for death, whereas there was nothing easier for them [to prove their position] than doing so. And with [the Prophet] calling the Christians to mutually invoke curses [on the wrongdoers], informing on the occurrence of the cursing, it is established that his description is known in their scriptures.

Al-Warrāq noted [the following objection]: If [the Jews] wished for death with their tongue, it would be said that they were asked to wish for it from their heart.[770] Secondly, [the People of the Book] believed in Moses and Jesus, and these two had informed them about that [i.e., the Prophet Muḥammad's advent], just like astrologers do [and not true prophecy].[771]

The answer to the first [objection]: The case of mutually invoking curses does not accept that [distinction between the tongue and the heart].[772] In addition, they were insightful people. Therefore, if it were objected to them [that they made the invocation with the tongue alone], they would say that they did it with their hearts as well.

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[769] Q. 2:94.

[770] The 'sinking' of worship of the Golden Calf into the hearts (*qulūb*) is mentioned in Q. 2:93 and the implication of "longing" (*tamannin*) in Q. 2:94 is an act of the heart.

[771] To understand al-Warrāq's argument in this passage, one must bear in mind that he sees prophets, whether those of the People of the Book, or the Prophet Muḥammad himself, as similar to astrologers: merely predictors of the future, rather than guides to be followed. For useful context in understanding this debate, originally between al-Warrāq and Ibn al-Rāwandī, see van Ess, *Theology and Society, Vol. 4*, 367-69.

[772] The invoking of curses must be done verbally, and so the criticism that it must be meant from the heart does not apply. Topaloğlu and Aruçi take the view that this is perhaps a mistake from Ibn al-Rāwandī or al-Māturīdī, because al-Warrāq's objection relates to the Jews wishing for death and not the mutual invoking of curses (*al-mubāhala*) with the Christians. See TA, 269, n. 1. But it is clear from al-Māturīdī's own treatment that he sees the two events as parallel examples of the People of the

The answer to the second [objection]: If [the Prophet was nothing more than an astrologer, his opponents] would not have refrained from confronting him at the time of [God's] statement, "You shall indeed enter the Inviolable Place of Worship"[773] and "He shall cause it to prevail over all religion."[774] And had [the Prophet being akin to an astrologer] been the true state of affairs, their confrontation [with him] would not have been at the cost of their most valuable things: their life and property.[775]

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: Also, if [he was just an astrologer], the report of the Messenger of God would not be [in such emphatic form] as, "You will never wish for death". On the contrary, it would be in the form that he knows they will not do it. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[Al-Warrāq] has thus criticized [the Prophet]; however, had he been judged by the speech of astrologers, there would not have been such fixity amongst them, so that they refrained from responding [to his call]. What the Prophet brought was not inferior to [what they possessed], yet they did not refrain due to what he made them fear and become Muslims.[776]

[Al-Warrāq] criticized [God's] statement: "And you (O Muḥammad) were not a reader of any scripture before it..."[777] saying that memorizing serves the function of [reading] the scripture. This [criticism] is impossible, because in order to memorize, it is necessary to read [a text]. If it was read

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Book being unable to follow through with their contestation of the Prophet's truth claims. Therefore, from al-Māturīdī's perspective it makes sense to bring up the argument that al-Warrāq's point about the Jews wishing for death cannot consistently apply to the invoking of curses.

[773] Q. 48:27.

[774] Q. 48:27. That is, they would not have taken these pronouncements seriously as prophecies and so would have confronted the Prophet to prevent him taking contro of Mecca and becoming dominant over them.

[775] In other words, if he was merely an astrologer, they would not have found themselves defeated.

[776] If al-Warrāq was correct, then the People of the Book would only be moving from one kind of astrologer to another and should be willing to embrace the message of the Prophet Muḥammad. But they were resistant, which reveals the reality of his messengerhood.

[777] Q. 29:48.

out to him, it would be from a scripture that is recited. Then, this is only the case for one who it is known visits another well-versed [in scripture]. However, it is known that [the Prophet] was raised among the most prominent of them, and nothing like this is known about him. If that [i.e., the Prophet's lack of training in scripture] was not the case, this portion of the response would have been easy, and they would not be incapable of making it.[778]

3) [Al-Warrāq] criticized the transmission of the Qur'an by claiming that it consists of single reports. However, this [statement] is a lie; on the contrary, [the Qur'an] has been transmitted by a multitude of people from another multitude with this being an attestation that it is a proof.

[Al-Warrāq] criticized the mass transmission of the Qur'an as follows: The community [who transmitted the Qur'an] was either too far [from the reciter] to hear, therefore open to deception, or was close, so the number of people who heard directly was low.

[In response to this,] Ibn al-Rāwandī said: [Those who say] this are ignorant about teaching sessions. Indeed, written and verbal transmission methods are used [in teaching sessions], so that almost nothing remains ambiguous to those who are far away let alone those who are close.

[Al-Warrāq] also criticized based on points of consensus between the Jews and Christians.

Ibn al-Rāwandī replied: Either [al-Warrāq] denies the report in absolute terms, thus his teaching becomes invalid through following Mani, and this position of his [i.e., denying the report as a means of knowledge]. Or he sees the report as permissible, in which case, he must return to the consensus of the People of Truth about rational principles, thus accepting their reports and points of consensus because they are the ones who hold fast to the truth, and we are from them, with praise to God.

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: The principle in this matter is that reports that are rationally indispensable must be accepted [as a means of knowledge] because otherwise the wisdom of hearing and speaking will be invalid, the sciences of the world and the Hereafter will disappear, and the means to nutrition and medicine on which the life of the bodies depends are cut off. Then, the reports spread more or less widely in proportion to the importance of the events to which they are related. For example, if a king is killed, this matter necessarily spreads to the extent that people cannot hide it even if they want. The same is the case with extraordinary events. Reports of less important or commonplace events do not widely spread, perhaps they are not even remembered. This is known in human nature. Accordingly, reports about the conquest of countries and the subjugation of rulers, and similarly, reports about the situation of the prophets, spread widely because the latter brought great and important things beyond the ordinary. Therefore, their reports attract much attention and spread all over the world, since those who hear such reports cannot hide them, as human nature tends to spread such reports. Also, useless reports of the kind I have mentioned may spread. Therefore, reports that concern everyone are more worthy of being disseminated. The reports that emanate from a single source spread, be they true or false. What is fabricated from them is identified and corrected, whereas the the correct part is confirmed and accepted. This requires the spread of the reports of the prophets while they were alive, the appearance of what is fabricated of it, so its traces [i.e., the fabricated part] are wiped by forbiddance and alteration, and the survival of the truthful part. The proof of this is the situation of the Messenger of God. As a matter of fact, you will definitely see his traces clearly in every distant place you go, especially during his age, because people were flowing over to him from all around the world and his reports were spreading in the lands. If such is the case, al-Warrāq's argument, "The reports of [the Qur'an] are single reports" is baseless. Nor do his other claims have a basis. On the contrary, single reports spread more widely if they are about an important or extraordinary matter. Therefore, what about the people of other religions being invited, sending letters to the horizons, the coming of delegations from all over the world, the messengers [i.e., the Prophet's messengers to others] being tested with various proofs, and the rulers tending to put out their light, fearing of losing their power?[779] In fact, rulers know that the bodies of the prophets are weak, and their supporters are few. Therefore, the reason for their fears is that they know that the prophets come from God, the Powerful, the Omniscient. Such is the case with important events such as miracles. The traces of such an event will not be erased, so long as the followers [of the messenger] survive. The same is proven by rational argumentation.[780] *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[778] In other words, it would have been easy to expose the Prophet's informants, yet they were unable to do so.

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[779] The reference here is to the messengers that the Prophet Muḥammad is said to have sent to the leaders of the Byzantines, the Sassanids and others.

As for the aforementioned points of consensus of the Jews and Christians [against Islam], they are not about miracles or important matters. On the contrary, these are issues in which they have disagreed upon in their views to the furthest possible extent, and that have spread among their followers.[781]

In addition, when this conflict [amongst the People of the Book] reached the point of changing the Law, so that the traces of the Law were almost erased and its reports lost, God in His generosity graciously sent those to revive [the Law] and to make manifest [the path] of the messengers with miracles that subdue the intellects. Thus, people would know by [the messengers] the changes and alterations [in the Law] and on that basis the [revived Law] became widespread.

Then, God decided to seal prophethood with Muḥammad, upon him be peace, and not to send another messenger to his community after him. God has made his community such that it will not accept change of the most significant matters and has bestowed upon them a scripture that He has protected. Change and alteration [in previous scripture] are known by it, so his Law will persist until the world is annihilated. *God alone leads to success.*

Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Rāwandī said: Al-Warrāq criticized the reports of the proofs of the messengers on the basis that they came through one or two paths. However, this is a serious slander. On the contrary, our community has agreed on these [reports]. Then, the matter of the Prophet of God is that which unbelievers inherit for implausible points of criticism and monotheists inherit for custody over the truth. The disbelievers agreed to find a weakness in his character or his courage, an inclination towards desires and a tendency towards various worldly interests, but they could not find them. This is the case if a high number [of narrators] is a condition for the soundness of reports. But what is the case if the condition for reports is that they should seize the hearts and make them at peace, that the soul should be content with the source and content, and that one's suspicions are lifted? This is the state of affairs for the reports of truthful people, even though their number is small.

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[780] Though the discussion in the paragraph mainly relies on the historical record and the way that testimony customarily spreada, al-Māturīdī argues that rational argumentation, of which there is some here, supports the same conclusions.

[781] In other words, these points of consensus represent opinions that have become popular, not core matters of the revealed religion.

4) Al-Warrāq criticized God's statement: "Ask the People of Remembrance if you know not..."[782]

i) How can it be [that this verse commands to ask the scholars of the People of the Book,] while [other verses] bear witness against them for concealing the truth? [The response is] that is said for them because God has subjugated them for that and compelled them to concur [with the Qur'an]. That is one of the great signs of [the Qur'an, that it is of divine origin:] God has united enemies and friends upon it. This is like His statement: "Is it not a sign for them that the scholars of the Children of Israel know it?"[783]

ii) Also, this [i.e., "Ask the People of Remembrance"] is said to one who continues to be obstinate after the proof has been presented to him, and it is said: Ask anyone with whom your heart is at peace about this matter and stop being stubborn.

iii) Thirdly, what is meant [by the People of Remembrance] applies to those among them who embraced Islam. *God alone leads to success.* It is possible [People of Remembrance] are a group who affirmed that [i.e., the content of the Qur'an] secretly like His statement: "Enjoin you righteousness upon mankind [while you yourselves forget (to practise it)]".[784]

iv) It is possible that what is meant by People of Remembrance are honorable people whose sense of honor prevents them from telling lies when they are undergoing arbitration. *God knows best.*

5) Al-Warrāq criticizes the Messenger of God for reporting that angels were present on the day of Badr. He said, "[If so,] where were [the angels] on the day of Uḥud?"

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[782] Q. 16:43, 21:7.

[783] Q. 26:197.

[784] Q. 2:44. Kholeif omitted this sentence from the main text of his edition, likely because the quoted verse does not match the stated point very well. A possible reconciliation is as follows: whereas the Children of Israel in this verse enjoin righteousness without practising it, the person who affirms Islam secretly practises righteousness without enjoining it.

The first answer is that (decapitated) heads appeared at Badr without a killer [the people could] see, and this statement was made by the enemies who said that they saw figures they did not recognize. The second answer is that this [i.e., the Battle of Badr] was the first battle. That is why God Most High wished to help them, thus manifesting the truth superior and abolishing the false.

[Ibn] al-Rāwandī said: It is astonishing that al-Warrāq disputes the reports of the messengers despite their proofs but calls the people to accept the doctrine of Manichaeism and forces them to adopt their nonsense that the heavens are paved with the skins of demons, and the earth is shaken by the motion of the serpents and scorpions in it. And [he calls on people] to accept their reports about the work of light and darkness and to reject what people see good with their intellect. *Strength comes from God alone.*

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: In the matter of Badr, the following aspects should be taken into account:

i) [On the day of Badr, the Prophet] took a handful of dust and struck all of [the disbelievers].

ii) The points expressed by [Ibn al-Rāwandī, above].

iii) Abū Jahl's words, which are similar to the mutual invocation of curses: "O God, help the best of us and the one who takes care of his relatives the most."

iv) The uniting of the leaders of the disbelievers.

v) Other than that. *God alone leads to success.*

6) Whoever rejects the messengers claims that the Wise does not enjoin what reason sees as bad because if it were possible for the reports [i.e., revelation] to bring the same [i.e., something bad], that would make it possible that injustice and lies are permissible.[785]

i) [Al-Warrāq's] objection may be answered as follows: There are two kinds of things that reason sees as good and bad:

a) One of them does not change. For example, such is the case with the goodness of giving thanks to the benefactor and the evil [of folly].

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[785] The argument is that the messengers are superfluous since they cannot be sent with commands that the reason rejects. See the comments by al-Warrāq below.

b) The second is what reason sees as good, considering the end, the beginning, and the present. An example of this is that reason sees it good to punish the one engrossed in aggressive corruption with the aim of taking revenge on him. The punishment of such a one may be decreed in the Law. Such is the case with the slaughter of animals. Since every living thing dies anyway, were its permissibility decreed, then slaughtering is more comfortable and easier [for the animal]. Therefore, [slaughtering an animal] takes the meaning of permissible things. [Next], justice is generally good, and injustice is generally bad. However, the evil of some things is revealed by prohibition and the goodness of some things is revealed by command. This is the case when one's states change and shift. The slaughter of animals is assessed in this way because it was introduced by the messengers who only come with justice. In the same way, according to the Dualists, light allowed the harm of darkness because it saw the benefit [in it].

Al-Warrāq said on a similar topic [i.e., on reason seeing things as good]: If the messengers hold tight to the evidence of reason in such a matter, then they are from us [i.e., they do not have any superiority because they adopt the judgment of reason just like us]. If the messengers oppose the evidence of reason, then God has made it evidence; another [ruling] cannot be permissible except by alteration. This requires the elimination of the [normative character of the divine] address.[786]

[Ibn] al-Rāwandī responded to [this objection] as follows: The hair on one's head is seen as black, then it is seen to have turned white. Now, has the sight of the one seeing changed, or has the thing seen changed? For [the hair] is black not because the eye has seen it. The same holds true of reason considering something as justice due to divine command.[787] This also applies to standing, sitting and all [other] states. The same for cupping, eating and drinking. These states are sometimes good despite their differences; hence, it is not necessary for reason to change, nor is it possible that a thing be good in the intellect at first, but then the opposite. The same is the case with the messengers. Then, great hardships may be tolerated for the desired good results, and a harmful choice [taken] to attain to a desired state of safety. For example, trading, leasing, agriculture, medicines and various surgeries are carried out in this way. Likewise, with choosing to leave the [lesser] benefit for the sake of the greater one. Such is the case with the Laws. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[786] See van Ess, *Theology and Society, Vol. 4*, 360-61.

[787] That is, something is objectively good or not as created by God regardless of whether one is informed about it by revelation.

Al-Warrāq has confirmed what we have explained, stating that it is evil according to reason to do evil to one who has done no evil as well as to fail to love for others what one loves for oneself. But the slaughter of animals lies outside of this category. This is because [al-Warrāq] imagines [the slaughter of animals] separately from its reasons. If he had pondered the [good] results, health, benefits, and extra comfort, he would have seen that these were present in slaughtering animals.

ii) We say, and *God alone leads to success*: Things are of two types:

a) Things which are good in themselves, such that the contrary and every opposing thing are bad.

b) Things which are good along with their opposites, depending on need and the establishment of evidence according to the praise and blame of the ends. Therefore, the [value] is determined by one who knows the states of praise and blame, so that the command emerges accordingly.

It is necessary that one who relies on their reason either encounters a contradictory difference caused by it or turns to a special intellect, which requires belief in the messenger. Then, slaughtering cannot be bad in itself, because it is permissible in the context of revenge. If one thinks about it, [slaughtering] is rationally good by warding off harm and the unpleasant, or through the benefit of its ends. Hence, the inherent badness of [slaughtering] is nullified and it becomes permissible to be tested in it either by abandoning it or by allowing it. This shows that [slaughtering] is permissible.

Also, what reason judges as good is never bad, and [what it judges] as bad is never good. What is bad is bad because human nature flees from it by imagining it settling in his [own] substance, so that his nature is averse due to its suffering. This [distaste] may fade through habituation, as is the case with butchers and warriors. Therefore, prohibiting [slaughtering] is a natural [i.e., emotional] attitude, rather than a rational one, and it changes with habit. This is similar to the fact that the substance of animals is wild by nature, such that the nature of all of them is to resist [carrying] heavy loads.

Then, through training and habituation from another, it becomes second nature to them. Such is the case with animals. Also, every living thing dies, and no one is blamed for it. The same is the case for its [slaughter] with the permission of its owner.

iii) One who [criticizes] the Dualists is right in the following matters:

a) They regard the separation of light and darkness, then their mixing and then separation as possible. This requires the splitting up of everything joined and the distinguishing of everything mixed. This is the meaning of slaughter.

b) Either pain inheres in the substance of light, so it becomes a site for harm, which is an evil. If there had been no [pain], the slaughter would not have been prohibited for this reason. Then, either the slaughter inheres in the substance of light, so that [light] commits evil, or it inheres in the substance of darkness, so there will be no point in forbidding and condemning [the slaughter], because one will condemn another whose nature is not suitable for accepting [that correction], like one commanding what cannot fly with flight. Or: pain inheres in the substance of darkness, which is the correct view according to the Dualists. Then, either the pain enters the animal through the substance of light, so light has committed evil, or it enters through the substance of darkness, so darkness[788] does good through causing pain, when that is justice.[789] *God alone leads to success.*

Also, [according to the Dualists,] the slaughter of animals involves saving the pure soul from the impure darkness, which is the truth. And it is the end of every living thing.[790]

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[788] Reading this word with MS. 105r and K, 202.

[789] The problem here for the Dualists is that sometimes causing pain is in the service of justice, which leads to darkness doing good. See 2.5.3 (9).

[790] The argument here is that, according to some Dualist cosmologies, the pure soul must ultimately escape from the impurity of corporeal existence. Dualists should not thus be against the slaughter of animals because it leads to precisely this end. See 2.5.3 (8).

[5.5. Affirmation of the Messengerhood of Muḥammad, may God bless him and grant him peace]

The prophethood of the prophets, and specifically the messengerhood of Muḥammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, has been established by his own self, then by the sensory and rational miracles, and then by the congruence of situations that are in need of him.

1) As for [the Prophet's] self, we have explained the initial points of this.[791] In addition, it is mentioned that one who one looked at his face and at the full moon recognized that his face was more beautiful than it. His scent was more pleasant than musk and [his skin] was softer than silk. His sweat was taken and infused in perfume. His bodily form was described as possessing a beauty that it was not known anyone had been described with its like. You see many eyes agitated in confusion by someone with bodily defects. Thus, the fact that he is free from all defects and adorned with all ornaments indicates that he has been made worthy of the highest degree and highest value amongst creatures. The signs that indicate this are as follows: no one ever witnessed him lying; he was not known to err, he never fled from his enemies; and he had no character flaws. On the contrary, as it was described, he neither flattered nor quarreled; obscenity was not known from him; he was not victorious for himself; he was so compassionate as to be reproved by His statement: "So let not your soul expire in sighings for them",[792] and "It may be that you torment yourself [(O Muḥammad) because they believe not]."[793] He was very sad about the destruction of the people, as God has described and protected him with His statement: "Grieve not for them",[794] and "It grieves him that you should perish..."[795] He was so generous that he received reproof for it, such that [God] said: "Nor open [your hand in charity] with a complete opening."[796] It is said that [the Prophet] did not save anything for the next day. He was offered the most desired worldly property and the leadership in return for a little flattery, but

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[791] See 5.2.
[792] Q. 35:8.
[793] Q. 26:3.
[794] Q. 16:128.
[795] Q. 9:128.
[796] Q. 17:29.

he did not accept this request. Rather, he fought the mighty, the kings and the chiefs for God, so that God honored him by casting fear into the hearts of the people. When he turned towards them to fight, they were afraid of him. It was said to him, "God will protect you from mankind",[797] and he was no longer afraid of them. It is not mentioned that he turned tail and fled from [his enemies] despite the great troubles and difficulties that befall his followers. It was promised that the property and dominance of his community would reach all that was gathered for him between the east and the west. It is related that various fears gripped the hearts of his enemies and that he was protected from what they threw at him, despite [many] of his relatives supporting those distant from him [against him]. [His enemies] agreed in their views to extinguish his light and wipe out his influence, but this only made him more prominent. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) Then the sensory miracles, such as the splitting of the moon,[798] the summoning of the tree, and the greeting of the stones: [people] know what is apparent from all of it. Then, many people drank from a little water. Then, his enemies were afflicted by drought and rainlessness by his supplication. Then, they sought his aid, so they were aided [with rain]. Then, he fed many people with a small amount of food. Then, the incident of Bayt al-Maqdis [he correctly answered the questions asked about al-Masjid al-Aqṣā after the Night Journey]. Then, people looking for him in the cave passed by [without seeing him], and God blinded them.[799] And the moaning of the palm trunk [for him], the complaining of the camel, the testification of the roasted lamb [to its poison]. Then, the sinking of the horse of the one who followed him into the ground. Then, he announced [that the Israelites would not want death] with the verse: "But they will never long for it"[800] and so it happened. Then [he challenged] by saying: "Call upon

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[797] Q. 5:67.

[798] This is considered an important miracle that the Prophet Muḥammad performed upon being challenged by the people of Mecca. It is one of the main interpretations of Q. 54:1: "The hour drew nigh and the moon was rent in twain." Al-Māturīdī comments: "[The splitting of the moon] has been narrated by more than one of the Companions, may God be pleased with them, and the hadith has been mass transmitted from the elect and the common people". Al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt al-qur'ān*, 14:226. See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-Manāqib*, 27, *Ṣifat al-qiyāma*, 8, *Manāqib al-anṣār*, 36.

[799] See Q. 9:40.

[800] Q. 63:7.

your (so-called) partners (of God), and then contrive against me, spare me not!"[801], they were not able [to respond to his challenge]. Then, despite the many plots they hatched, God protected him from them. God revealed to him the grave things that the people of hypocrisy concealed in their hearts. Despite the severity of their obstinacy, [the hypocrites] were afraid that a sura might be revealed to inform of [the evil] they hid in their hearts and that it might make him aware of what they said about him and his followers.[802] And what he said about Abū Bakr and his companions from His statement: "Will it be that, when he dies or is slain, you will turn back on your heels? [He who turns back on his heels does no hurt to God, and God will reward the thankful]."[803] Likewise in His statement: "Whoever from you turns back from his religion..."[804] And his informing ʿAlī that he would fight the disloyal renegades and it happened. And what he told ʿAmmār that "The rebellious group will kill you."[805] He promised to the believers conquests and worldly wealth. And much more could be mentioned were the narrators[806] of the best of his community to conduct a thorough study. Then, most of what [has been described] was known to his enemies. In addition, his advent was in the revealed scriptures, and glad tidings and taking the covenant about him were on the tongues of the messengers.[807] *Strength comes from God alone.*

3) As for the rational [miracles], there is that which God has explained of the affair of the Qur'an. Only those who are well-versed in the literary sciences and are acquainted with the essence of speech and its kinds know that the Qur'an falls outside the power of creatures. Then, there are the contestations about the oneness of the Lord [in the Qur'an] and the evidence of the resurrection that no one on earth claimed at that time. Then, what is [mentioned] in it that happened in the past and what will happen forever, and the explanation of events that [cannot] be known by the mind.

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[801] Q. 7:195.

[802] See Q. 9:64: "The hypocrites fear lest a sura should be revealed concerning them, proclaiming what is in their hearts..."

[803] Q. 3:144.

[804] Q. 5:54.

[805] See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, al-Jihād*, 17. This is also referenced by al-Māturīdī under 6.17 (3).

[806] Reading MS 106r as *ruwāt*.

[807] See Q. 3:81.

Abû Zayd[808] stated that sufficient narrations have arrived regarding the sensory miracles, and that the rational [miracles] are various:

i) First, [the Prophet's messengerhood] was not considered strange. On the contrary, it came as the continuation of a custom due to there being similar instances in other nations. It is therefore baseless to reject [his messengerhood] at first glance. God Most High says: "And there is not a nation but a warner has passed among them",[809] "And for every folk a guide",[810] and "Then We sent our messengers one after another."[811]

ii) Second, his advent coincided with the era when he was needed because at that time the lessons of knowledge were interrupted.[812] This is in accord with the habit of God to bring a new means of guidance when its people stray from the path of guidance. God Most High said: "Now has Our messenger come unto you, explaining for you..."[813]

iii) Third, the [society] to which he was sent needed him, because his nation lacked the means of knowledge, as He states: "It is He who has sent among the people who had no scripture a messenger of their own", and other [verses] than it.[814]

iv) Fourth, [he was sent as a messenger] in the most evident of places for the creation, because it [i.e., Mecca] was one of the landmarks for people of distant lands within the world. God Most High said: "And thus We have inspired in you [an Arabic recital to warn the Mother Town and whomsoever is around it...]"[815]

v) Fifth, the people expected and desired his prophethood. If one asks his Lord to remove his illness, there is no need to be surprised if his illness is removed. God Most High says: "And if we had destroyed them with some punishment before it..."[816] He said, "And they swore by God, their most binding oath, that if a warner came unto them..."[817] These five [evidences] are from the contestation with [the disbelievers] by [the Prophet] in terms of [the people's] states.

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[808] Topaloğlu and Aruçi suggest Abū Zayd Sa'īd b. Aws b. Thābit al-Anṣārī (d. 215/830), a Basran littérateur, as the possible source. It could conceivably be a reference to Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (322/934), the well-known member of the circle of al-Kindī who was more proximate to al-Māturīdī.

[809] Q. 35:24.

[810] Q. 13:7.

[811] Q. 23:44.

[812] Reading *fatrat durūs al-'ilm*. In other words, there had been an interruption in prophetic guidance since the era of Jesus.

[813] Q. 5:15.

[814] Q. 62:2.

[815] Q. 42:7.

4) Also, there is contestation with them regarding the states of the Prophet, as follows: he was born and raised amongst a people without scripture nor education, and he never separated from them. There were not for them books to be studied by means of an earlier education. Implicit in this is that had a [learned] person appeared among them [i.e., a potential teacher of the Prophet], they would not be ignorant of his place. That is found in His statement: "Or know they not their messenger...?"[818] Another verse: "This is of the tidings of the unseen which We inspire in you (Muḥammad)..."[819] [The Prophet] grew up as unlettered, and the unlettered person does not take from books, nor can he memorize orally very well. His retention is through intelligible spiritual images that elevate what he retains from the imagination. The evidence for this is that poems and the like were not narrated from [unlettered] people like him for fear of error. Therefore, their amazement was strengthened due to his memorization of the Qur'an. God Most High said: "We shall make you read (O Muḥammad) so that you shall not forget..."[820] Another verse: "Stir not your tongue herewith to hasten it..."[821] That is why it is said in describing memorization the memorized things must be bound more tightly to the hearts of men than camels to their fetters [lest they escape]. God Most High has said: "And you (O Muḥammad) were not a reader of any scripture before it..."[822] Again, it has not been reported that he was preoccupied with the art of oratory and literary genres in the earlier years of his life. Then, it is impossible for one like him to produce a work that even people who were famous for their education [and experience in the art of oratory] were incapable of producing. The proof of this is that he was never criticized [in the context of oratory].

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[816] Q. 20:134.
[817] Q. 35:42.
[818] Q. 23:69.
[819] Q. 11:49.
[820] Q. 87:6.
[821] Q. 75:16.
[822] Q. 29:48.

On the contrary, when it was claimed that [the Qur'an] was his word, it was immediately said: "Then bring a sura like unto it."[823] Thereupon, they remained silent and could not claim that he presented his own word [as the Qur'an]. God Most High said: "Say: If God had so willed, I should not have recited it to you..."[824]

Again, God Most High enjoined [the disbelievers] to reflect on [the Prophet's] states: Did they find anything to justify their disregard for him? No, they could not, as God Most High said: "Say (unto them, O Muḥammad): I exhort you unto one thing only: [that you awake, for the sake of God, by twos and singly, and then reflect: there is no madness in your comrade. He is naught else than a warner unto you in face of a terrific doom]."[825]

One of the things that calls on [the deniers] to reflect about the Prophet's affair is: Do they find him turning to kings for worldly gain as did the rhetoricians? On the contrary, desirable things that honor the human being such as wealth and leadership were offered to him to convert from his religion, but he did not accept them. This is to let one know – with the constant nature of opposing whims and restraining the self from pleasures – he lived as God had trained him and honored him for the land of honor, without inclining to the crumbs of the world, saying: "I ask of you no fee for this, and I am not a pretender."[826]

Also, [the Prophet] contested with the [disbelievers] by urging them to reflect on religions, thus aiming for them to see that [the Prophet] followed the most perfect [religion]; one that prompts its rational choice. So, God said: "(And the warner) said: What! Even though I bring you better guidance than that you found your fathers following?"[827] And He says: "Say: O People of the Book! Come to an agreement [between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God...]"[828] Again, [the Prophet] challenged them with the incapacity to bring what he had brought in the Qur'an, intending this to be a proof for him due to its exclusion from human capacity.

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[823] Q. 10:38.
[824] Q. 10:16.
[825] Q. 34:46.
[826] Q. 38:86.
[827] Q. 43:24.
[828] Q. 3:64.

Additionally, the skill that exalts and raises the value of the speech is of two types:

i) The skill of poetry with pleasing composition.

ii) The skill of divination that expresses the Arabic meanings of things that will happen in the future.

Then, it has been seen that the Qur'an is at a higher level than the works produced by the poets in terms of composition, and at a higher level than the works of the oracles in terms of meanings. Therefore, it is necessary that the Qur'an is not human speech. In this way, God Most High argues: "Say: Verily, though mankind and the jinn should assemble to produce the like of this Qur'an, [they could not produce the like thereof]...";[829] "It is not a poet's speech...";[830] "Has there not come unto them the proof [of what is in the former scriptures?]";[831] and "(This is) a Scripture that We have revealed unto you, full of blessing."[832] Another verse is: "Say: Then bring a scripture from the presence of God..."[833]

An indication of the support that made the call of [the Prophet] dominant and his proof successful is that [God] gave him victory over those who opposed him and showed enmity. For God Most High sent him to the servants at a time when the signs of guidance and the teachings of the traces of religion were erased, aiming to save them from destruction. Then, when He placed him in this lofty rank and momentous situation, He did not deprive him of His support, but reinforced His goodness towards him with the rank he bestowed upon him. As He clarified: "Lo! We verily do help Our messengers..."[834] And His statement: "God has decreed: Lo! I verily shall conquer, I and My messengers..."[835] In the same way, the speech of God has previously come to His servants, the messengers.

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[829] Q. 17:88.
[830] Q. 69:41.
[831] Q. 20:133.
[832] Q. 38:29.
[833] Q. 28:49.
[834] Q. 40:51.
[835] Q. 58:21.

Another specific aspect of [the Prophet] is that he was sent to all humanity and was promised that he would be victorious. The purpose of this is to make it known that his power is not dependent on the human assistance that the aspirants of worldly power use to attain their desire of inheriting sovereignty and acquiring beneficial goods. Rather it is as God said: "Did He not find you destitute and enrich (you)?"[836] Nor does his power depend on any clan. On the contrary, the strongest men were against him, and they were the most determined to extinguish his light, so that they drove him from being the most prominent among them to an isolated outcast. Then, on the other hand, they gave him everything that the soul might desire. But he did not incline to them. On the contrary, he was patient with every harm and endured all hardships. The only thing he wanted from them was that they would respond to him in accepting the truth. God Most High said: "There has come unto you a messenger, (one) of yourselves...";[837] He said: "If you help him not, still God helped him...";[838] He said: "God has given you victory on many fields and on the day of Hunayn.";[839] and He said: "And that which God gave as spoil [unto His messenger from them...]"[840] There are other verses and truthful evidence that [relate] that [the Prophet] took a stand with God's help and was victorious.

Another aspect of their contestation with him is what manifested from the fulfillment of everything that [the Prophet] promised in his speech regarding the knowledge of the unseen, which no one knows but God. Whoever seeks to attain [this knowledge] through human tricks, the truth of the knowledge he brings is lost in its [accompanying] falsehood, its veracity is lost in its lies, and his affair will result in distortion and deception. God says: "Shall I inform you on whom the devils will descend...?"[841] Thus, He reported that the oracles produced their reports based on the news that the devils stole, such that they sweetened many false words and unfounded claims with a tiny bit of truth.

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[836] Q. 93:8.
[837] Q. 9:128.
[838] Q. 9:40.
[839] Q. 9:128.
[840] Q. 59:6.
[841] Q. 26:221.

The basic principle is that much of divination is based on lies and deception, whereas magic is based on verisimilitude and arousing the imagination. The prophets received their reports[842] from the tongues of virtuous angels, and as is known from experience, within them are only found veracity and truth. The deeds of [the prophets] are real and established despite the elapse of ages. [If these reports had not been taken from the tongues of angels], such would not have been the case.

Then, the Book of God expresses the superiority of his religion over all religions. It also informs about events and occurrences, such as His statement: "It is He who has sent His messenger with guidance [and the religion of truth ...]";[843] His words: "They wish to put out the light of God with their mouths ...";[844] His statement: "Or they say: We are a host victorious...?";[845] His statement: "Lo! We shall suffice you from the scoffers";[846] His words: "Fight them! God will chastise them at your hands...";[847] He said: "See they not how we aim to the land, reducing it of its outlying parts?";[848] His statement: "As for those who disbelieve, disaster ceases not to strike [them because of what they do, or it dwells near their home until the threat of God comes to pass]";[849] He said: "And when God promised you [one of the two bands (of the enemy) that it should be yours]";[850] and His statement: "God did indeed fulfill His promise to you."[851] There were specific reports about people that they would not believe and that they would go to Hell, and then they died as disbelievers. There are similar reports of unseen origin that, when considered, are known to be from God as miracles for [the Prophet].

Whoever reflects on what we have enumerated of the states of the Prophet, upon him be peace, realizes that all the aspects of rational proof that point to his prophethood have been put in order. May God bless the best of His creatures [i.e., the Prophet Muḥammad].

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[842] Reading the word *ikhtār* as *ikhbār* on MS. 108r.
[843] Q. 61:9. 48:28, 9:33.
[844] Q. 9:32.
[845] Q. 54:44.
[846] Q. 15:95.
[847] Q. 9:14.
[848] Q. 13:41.
[849] Q. 13:31.
[850] Q. 8:7.
[851] Q. 3:152.

[5.6. A Critique of Those who Deny Some of the Messengers]

Then, the dialogue between us and those who accept the messengers in general but deny some of them in particular is that we ask them the reason that they or their ancestors accepted the messengers. If they point to a meaning which, if accepted as true, necessitates prophecy, we oblige them to accept the same meaning in relation to the prophecy of Muḥammad, may God bless him. Although the miracles [performed by the prophets] are different individually, the meaning that constitutes the essence of the miracle is not different. If they hold on to the outward appearance of the miracles, they will never find with anyone the like [of the miracles] of Muḥammad, upon him be peace, in terms of wonder and sublimity; or [considering the meaning, the miracles] emerging from both [the Prophet and the other prophet] are the same. If they claim that we are in agreement with them [in accepting prophethood], we will answer this in various ways:

1) Before our agreement, the reason for their acceptance of prophethood is asked.

2) We affirm, according to what is established for us, that the one who informed us about them [i.e., the messengers they accept] is a messenger [i.e., the Prophet], but you deny it. Therefore, your evidence has been refuted. So, what is your proof?

3) That [the messengers] are accepted according to the distinction that they do not accept for the one [i.e., the Prophet] to whom they are invited.

4) It is said: We only accept the one whose prophethood has been accepted by our prophet. If the one whom you deem a prophet is one whose prophethood has been accepted by our prophet, the prophethood of our prophet has been established. If not, what is the proof of the prophethood of the one you claim to be a prophet? So, how is the point that you want to prove to be accepted? *Help is from God alone.*

[5.7. A Critique of the Doctrine of Christology]

1) The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: Christians have diverged on the matter of Christ. According to some, he has two spirits. One is the spirit of humanity, which was originated and resembles the spirit of other people. The other is the eternal spirit of divinity, which is part of God and entered that body.[852] They said: There is only the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Others have said that the spirit in Christ is God Himself, not part [of God]. However, one group of them saw [the presence of God] in Christ as the presence of a thing in a thing, while another group, saw this presence not as the envelopment of the body by it, but as the governance of the body by it.[853] Among them, there are those who say: A part of God Most High is connected to [Christ], and another part is separated [from him].[854]

Ibn Shabīb said: According to what I have heard from Christians who say that Christ was born, he was not [God's] son by birth, but by adoption. This is like calling the wives of Muḥammad, upon him be peace, "Mothers [of the believers]" or one man calling another, "O my son".

2) The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: It is said to the Christians: If the spirit in [Christ] is eternal, which is [God's] part, how did that part become a son without the other parts [of God] connecting [to it]? If it is said, "For [the Son] is less [than the other parts]", it is necessary to regard all parts of the world as the sons of that which is greater than them. Thus, he is forced to consider every remaining part in the same way. So, [the world] becomes "sons" in its entirety.[855]

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[852] This is similar to the Christological doctrine of the Melkites. Thomas, *Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology*, 97, n. 3.

[853] This is akin to Nestorian Christology. Thomas, *Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology*, 97, n. 5.

[854] This resembles Jacobite Christology. Thomas, *Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology*, 99, n. 6.

[855] This argument first seeks an explanation for why just the "Son" of the Trinity incarnates into a human being. Considering the possible reply that this happens because the Son is less than the other parts of the Trinity, al-Māturīdī tries to show the absurdity of making this a general metaphysical principle by analogy: all the parts of the world would be "sons" to the larger remaining parts. Yet it is obvious that such a relationship is not found within the created order.

Then, as is known, the son is younger than the father. So how are they both eternal? If [the interlocutor] says the whole [of God] entered the body [of Christ], he is asked: "Which part of God is the Son?" If he says: "The whole [of God is the Son]", he will consider the whole of God to be Son and Father, which means taking the Father as his own son.

If it is said: "[The Son] is a part of [God], but without a deficiency in the entirety of the source, like the part [of fire] taken from the lamp." The following answer is given: "If the part taken [from God] was temporal like [the fire] taken from a lamp, it nullifies his belief that the [divine] spirit, who is the Son, is eternal. If he claims that [the Son] is transmitted from God, just like the thing taken, the preceding criticism will apply to it.[856]

Then, how does he know that [the fire] taken from the lamp does not reduce it? If it is said, "Because we see that [the lamp] has not decreased," [we say], "Perhaps God originated that [fire] or it emerged like the fire coming out of flint. In both cases, [the fire] is temporal and what is temporal is created.

Then, how is it possible that [Jesus] is the Son [of God]? [The interlocutor] says: because God has manifested extraordinary things from him. It is said to him: He manifested extraordinary things from Moses as well. So, you should say that he is another son of His. If you claim that was due to [Moses'] supplication and entreaty, such is the case for others. For instance, it [is reported] from Jesus that he said on the night of his arrest: "O God, if You wish to ward off this bitter cup from someone, ward it off from me."[857] If it is said: "The crying and entreaty of Jesus is for teaching people." It is said: "Moses did the same." Moreover, both [Jesus] and Moses prayed towards Bayt al-Maqdis and entreated. Then, crying and entreaty are natural acts from which one cannot refrain. So, what is the meaning of [this] teaching?[858]

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[856] The concept of "transmission" (*manqūl*) does not alter the problem of the supposed eternal Son entering the temporal world in Christ. Thomas, *Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology*, 101, n. 11.

[857] See Matthew 26:39, in which Jesus is quoted as saying: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not what I want but what you want."

[858] That is, Jesus does not need to teach people to entreaty God, because that is natural to human beings and cannot be avoided.

Then, if [Jesus] deserved to be [the Son of God] through his deeds, the same is necessary for Moses and others. If it is said that [Jesus] deserved it through raising the dead and nothing else, it is said that Ezekiel also resurrected a human being. If he disputes with [the fact Jesus resurrected] many people, then the Jews say that Moses raised more people than [Jesus] did.

3) The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: More than once Moses turned an inanimate staff into a snake, which is a greater feat.[859] If he contests with [Jesus] feeding many people with a small amount of food, we will reply that our Prophet did that too: he brought into existence some flour in a vessel that was not in it. If it is said [Jesus] turned water into wine, then Elisha has made many vessels of oil for a woman.[860] If it is said that [Jesus] walked on water, then [Christians] accept this for Joshua the son of Nun, Elijah and Elisha as well.[861] If they [say that Jesus is the Son of God] because he ascended to the heaven, they accept the same for Elijah and say that he ascended to the heaven before the eyes of a congregation.[862] If they bring as proof that Jesus healed the blind and the leper, then it is greater to raise the dead. Moreover, they accept [the miracle of performing resurrection] for Elijah and Elisha as well.[863] In addition, [Christians] acknowledge that the Jews crucified and derided [Jesus]. If [the fact that Jesus is the Son of God] signifies exaltation, this signifies humiliation. Should not [Jesus] have done what Elijah did when they came to him? He set fire to them, burning them to ashes. In this way, [God] honored [Elijah].[864] If they turn to presenting extraordinary things just to prove the special characteristic [of Jesus as Son of God], they will be responded to [with the other prophets] I have mentioned.

Then, say: God is in the heaven and on earth because He has manifested extraordinary things in the heaven and on earth.[865] Thus, everything must be considered special in the way they consider [Jesus] special.

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[859] See Q. 27:10, 7:117 etc.

[860] See 2 Kings, 4:1-7.

[861] See Joshua, 3:7-17, 2 Kings, 2:7-8; and 2 Kings, 2:13-14 respectively.

[862] See 2 Kings, 2:11-12, 15-17.

[863] See 1 Kings, 17:17-24 and 2 Kings, 4:32-35 respectively.

[864] See 2 Kings, 1:9-14.

[865] The reference is to Q. 6:3: "He is God in the heavens and in the earth", which is obviously not referring to literal location.

If [the Christian interlocutor] argues: "Christ was given the power to act [miraculously] – it was not an action through him."[866] It is said: "Did [Christ] create bodily objects?" If he says, "Yes", it is said: "Is he a creature?" If he says, "Yes", it is said: "His body and soul are like our body and soul; what is it about him that enables him to do what we cannot? Was he able to do this through a power that is a part of God or through an originated power? If he says: "He can do it through a part [of God]", his belief in Christ and Christ's God is abolished, and it will be God not Christ [who is acting]. If the part in question was cut off from God, then [a creature] other than God would have created many bodies.[867] If they claim that [Jesus] is connected with God [through the part], then the action belongs to them both [i.e., God and Christ], and they both belong to God. Hence, God is the agent. If they claim that there is a power in [Christ] through which he created bodies, though not by [God's] action, then they have made a part of Christ's God dispose of himself how he wishes. If he says that Christ created bodies not by a temporal power, but by himself, we answer based on what we have affirmed [that is, it is either God or Christ who acts alone].[868]

5.8. An Enquiry [on the Temporality of Bodies as applied to Jesus and on the Name "Son"]

Then, let us talk of the proof for the temporality of bodies. If [the opponent] says that this proof is reason, he should accept that [reason is also a proof] about Jesus. If he says [that the proof of the temporality of the bodies] is tradition, it is said: And what is the evidence for the truth of what has been reported? If he says, "The temporality of things", then the temporality of things is only known through tradition and its truth is only known through the temporality of things. So, the means to gain knowledge about things is cut off except were one to accept reason.[869] The same judgment is also required about Christ [i.e., the eternity of Christ must be proven through reason].

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[866] See Thomas, *Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology*, 107, n. 26.

[867] Either the part of God is truly acting, in which case it is not an action performed by Christ at all, or the part is cut off from God, leading to the creation of bodies without God's involvement.

[868] It is important to note that al-Māturīdī's concern in this paragraph is with rebutting the idea that Christ is able to create bodily objects, which is something that is reserved exclusively for God within his theological system.

[869] In other words, the reports of tradition need to be validated by reason. See 1.2.3.

Then [al-Mâturidi] objected to whoever said: There is no greater honor than the phrase, "My son". It is said: On the contrary,[870] "My father" expresses a greater exaltation. If the [Christian interlocutor] said [that the phrase, "My son"] required priority, he would have invalidated his point of view about exaltation, because the phrase "My son" does not express [priority]. Then, if it has been established [that God named Christ "My Son"], He named others ["My son"]. If it is said: [With the phrase "My son"], one renders the addressee equal to himself. It is said: One man happens to say to another, "Brother!", but he does not mean [to make him equal to himself]. Then, there are other praiseworthy people [among His creatures]; perhaps [God] named others "My son" too, such that He has made apostles and prophets share this title [and being named "My son" does not make Christ the Son of God].

It is objected that things are named ["My son"] to honor them based on their friendship and concerns. It is answered: As for sonhood, it is only used between beings of the same kind; for example, it is impossible for [a person] to call a donkey or a dog "My son". Thus, it is impossible [to call Christ "the Son of God"]. In general, aspects of love and friendship may be used between different kinds, just as rights may obtain in these aspects and others. Moreover, God may have friends and loved ones amongst creatures; yet it is impossible that [He has] children. *Strength comes from God alone.*

According to us, the principle in this [i.e., the matter of Jesus] is that the disagreement pertains to two aspects:

1) Lordship: God Most High, exalted is His praise, has explained the impossibility [for Jesus to be Lord] because he ate, drank, and relieved himself in the latrine. Again, [God] described [Jesus] in his youth and maturity, and by his worship of God Most High, his supplication, his submission, his calling people to worship God, his monotheism, his giving the glad tidings of Muḥammad, may peace and blessings be upon him, and his belief in the messengers. Then, [God], exalted is His praise, made [Jesus] with all the signs of temporality and the tokens of servitude that He put in the

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[870] An indistinct word on MS. 110r is rendered *balā* (Yes, indeed!) in TA, 291, but this would confirm that there is no greater honor than "My son", which is the opposite to the intended meaning. It has, therefore, been read as *bal.*

entire world. Again, [Jesus], may God bless him and grant him peace, did not make any claim for himself other than servitude and messengerhood. Therefore, ascribing to him divinity is a meaningless statement. Moreover, if it were possible [for him to be divine], the same would be possible for all human beings. The astounding thing is that [his people] did not accept for him the rank of messengerhood in his life and stay upon the earth, despite his proofs. Then, after his ascension, or his death according to most of them, they did not accept for him servitude and messengerhood, so that they invented the rank of lordship for him. Thus, [Jesus] will testify against them with his creation, substance, [verbal] explanation and everything from him that they lied from start to finish.[871]

2) That he is the Son of [God], which may be understood in various ways:

i) The first is by birth. This is impossible and false because need cannot touch the Lord, desire cannot overcome Him, and the distress of loneliness cannot beset Him. Yet these are the reasons for seeking children. It is impossible to have a child without the substance of the father, whereas God Most High in His essence is beyond resembling creatures or the meaning that may accept this aspect. As God has explained, if He were to take an amusement, He would not take it from us.[872]

Then, every parent agrees to partner with his child and for his property to pass to him. However, [God], who in His essence is Lord, King and powerful, does not accept this. One who says [the following is right]: "It is meaningless that a part of a thing should be its child, and that it should not be complete until [the child] appears." The aspects of miracles [i.e., the above-mentioned miracles of Christ] do not require this [i.e., Christ being the Son of God] because miracles are not the way to know sonhood in the visible world. In addition, others share these [miracles with Christ].

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[871] This passage presents the common Islamic view that Jesus was not crucified and killed but raised to the heavens while still living. Al-Māturīdī takes this as an interpretation of Q. 4:157-58: "They slew him not nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them; and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture; they slew him not for certain. But God took him up unto Himself." See al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt al-qur'ān*, 4:100-102.

[872] See Q. 21:17: "If We had wished to find a pastime, We could have found it in Our presence – if We ever did."

Then, [Christ] declares that he is truthful when he says that he worships God alone.[873] So, the miracles only prove that [he worships God], nothing else.

ii) Or [Jesus] is named [the Son of God] due to his virtue. However, as far as it is known in the visible world, [being a son] is not a name of exaltation. On the contrary, his being named "Christ" and "the Messenger" is loftier and greater in that regard.

Then, God Most High has blessed many of the creatures [i.e., many people] with marvels that single them out as special. But none of them has ever required the name of sonhood. This is because sonhood does not connote in speech the possessor of power and high rank, but rather lowliness and weakness. This situation is the affair of sons. Therefore, [the son] receives honor and exaltation during his youth [i.e., to raise his station], since that comes from the elders to those who are younger. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iii) Or [Jesus is named the Son of God] because God is his sanctuary and refuge in every important task and in times of trouble. In this respect, all creatures are like that. This is similar to the fact that the Abyss [i.e., Hell] is named "mother" for its people[874] and the land is named "mother" for its inhabitants.[875] In this respect, God is the refuge and resort of creatures. Expressing this meaning by the term "son" is only possible with permission.[876] *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[873] See Q. 5:116.

[874] The reference is to Q. 101:9: "His mother is the Abyss (*fa-ummuhu hāwiya*)".

[875] Mecca is famously known as "Mother of the Towns" (*umm al-qurā*).

[876] That is, there would need to be an explicit scriptural basis for using the term in this way.

Chapter Six

Enquiries of Divine and Human Action[877]

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[877] Topaloğlu and Aruçi title this chapter Enquiries of Divine Decree and Determination (*masāʾil al-qaḍāʾ wa-l-qadar*). That title is used by al-Māturīdī for section 6.14, in which he begins by asserting the principle that the matter of divine decree and determination comes under the creation of actions (*khalq al-afʿāl*). The master theme of this chapter is therefore divine and human action. This was recognized by Kholeif who titled the first section "Enquiry of the Actions of God (*masʾala afʿāl allāh*)" and the second "Enquiry of the Actions of Creatures and their Affirmation (*masʾala fī afʿāl al-khalq wa-ithbātihā*)".

6.1. Enquiry: [Wisdom and Folly]

1) A group of the People of Monotheism claims that most of the followers of monotheism depart from it in two ways: either from ignorance of its requirements or incapacity in purifying[878] [monotheism] from the teachings of the Dualists and other unbelievers. One group [i.e., the Baghdadī Muʿtazila] claims that whoever acts[879] without benefit is devoid of wisdom, and whoever acts without a motive is engaged in futility. Therefore, they thought that God would not start an action to harm someone as that would remove wisdom from Him. Hence, they mandate that in every action [God] performs, He does what is most beneficial for others in terms of religion and what is best for others in terms of outcome.[880] For God is exalted above doing what will benefit Him or a thing harming Him. They thought that He only acts to benefit another or prevent harm from another. So, that also serves as the motive of His action because the motive of the action of every wise person among us is what he considers the near or distant benefit, or removal of harm attaching to it. Thus, through that [deed], people's praise and great reward are earned. They tried to evaluate the action of [God] by taking the actions of others as a criterion. For example, that it is impossible for one to lie and oppress as required by wisdom; that it is impossible for motion to arise from one without departure or stillness without settling. Thus, it has been established that it is necessary to assess His action by taking as a criterion the action of the wise in the visible world. However, they rejected the notion that by doing a thing, His rank would rise, and by failing to do it, His rank would fall. So, they considered it necessary that He does not benefit Himself by His actions, nor does He remove

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[878] This word appears as *talkhīṣ* (to summarise) in the MS. 111v, TA, 295 and K, 215. This seems to be a corruption of *takhlīṣ* (to purify), especially if one considers the preposition *min* (from) in relation to it (*Translator*).

[879] This reads *yaʿqilu* in TA, 295 and K, 215, and *bi-ʿaql* in MS. 111v. Given the context, it is more likely a corruption of *yafʿalu*.

[880] This is the doctrine of the most beneficial (*al-aṣlaḥ*). See 3.1 (2).

harm from Himself. Then, His action is wisdom because it benefits another or removes harm from another. As a result, they considered this the motive for His action, such that it prevents it from being futile.

2) In this respect, they opposed the Dualists because the latter do not accept that an act may be wise unless it is useful to the agent. Thus, they affirm the action possessing the substance of wisdom at the time of mixing [of light and darkness] on account of it freeing itself from the category of the substance of folly. Thus, His action becomes wisdom by taking the visible world as a criterion. Additionally [the Dualists say:] It is impossible for a thing in the visible world to come into existence out of nothing. So, they have said that there must be a source from which the whole world was made and generated, because in the visible world, there is no difference between the act that is excluded from the reality of existence [and the act that is excluded from a source]. Therefore, [creation *ex nihilo*] must be denied from a wise agent. The People of Monotheism disagreed with the Dualists in these two matters.[881]

3) Then, a group of them [i.e., the People of Monotheism] argued that His act could not occur without a motive because they regard such an act as futile in the visible world. They hold that if there is no benefit from the harmful act, the outcome of that act will be folly. This approach is similar to the Dualist view of the deed that does not benefit the agent. Then, [the People of Monotheism] diverged. A group claimed that there was no harm in reality for the one acted on [i.e., by God], even if entreaty and lament were heard from him; another group claimed that the victim would actually be harmed but added that God would compensate for this damage and that the act [of harm] would be wise thanks to this compensation. In fact, those who suffer great difficulties and drink disgusting medicines in the visible world do this for a purpose, and surgical operations are performed to achieve certain results. So, there is no harming act of God without compensation.

4) The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: Whoever knows God properly, and knows His independence and authority, then His power and sovereignty, and that "the creation and command belong to Him,"[882]

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[881] The two matters are 1) that everything in the world requires a pre-existent source; and that an act cannot be wise unless it benefits the agent.

[882] Q. 7:54.

knows that it is impossible for His actions to depart from wisdom because He is wise, independent and omniscient in His essence. In the visible world, it is ignorance and neediness that causes one to depart from wisdom, both of which are negated from God. Thus, it is established that His action does not depart from wisdom. On the basis of what I have said, it is invalid for His action to take place in motion and stillness because they are two instances of neediness that inhere in their possessor. Through one of them [i.e., stillness] he finds for himself comfort and consolation, whereas through the other one he achieves his desire and aspiration. This is because one reaches his goal only by moving and leaving his place, and one gets rid of fatigue and exhaustion only through settling and being still.[883] However, since the independence and power of God, exalted is He, are established, any neediness or desire attaching to Him is false. And since his power, authority and knowledge are affirmed, it is false to characterize Him as unable to initially create a thing out of nothing, as this is a sign of neediness and an indication of weakness. The neediness of everything that can be sensed and reached by human knowledge indicates that the world has been determined, and [God], powerful and independent, knows the world. It is not possible to remove[884] [the ability to create a thing out of nothing] from one whose independence, power, wisdom and knowledge is known. *Strength comes from God alone.*

For this reason, it must be accepted that, by the necessity of reason, the world can come into existence out of nothing and that His action takes place in accordance with wisdom. However, the intellects of the sages of the world are unable to reach it because an aspect of [His] wisdom is beyond the capacity of their intellects. Since we have explained about a thing coming into being out of nothing and the possibility of an action to emerge from one who does not benefit from it, the reality of the command is manifest for Him and "the creation and command belong to Him." Every sovereign has the right, due to his sovereignty, to do whatever he wishes in his dominion. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[883] See 4.7.

[884] Reading *izāla* with the MS. 112v and K, 217.

5) Then, the principle is that, in general, oppression and folly are bad, whereas justice and wisdom are good. However, a thing becomes wisdom in one state, and folly in another; injustice in one, and justice in the other. In fact, I have already given the example of drinking [unpleasant] medicines. Then, eating, drinking, disposing of, or keeping things of various substances happens due to needs, punishments, rights, and so on. It has been established that, in general, wisdom and justice are good, while folly and injustice are bad, and every act of God Most High's creation must at least be described as wisdom and justice or as grace and benevolence, since it is affirmed that God is generous, gracious, independent and omniscient, and the attachment of injustice and folly to Him is false because their cause is ignorance and neediness. Thus, it is established that one thing may be divided into injustice and justice, wisdom and folly.[885] However, it is possible that the reason for this may remain hidden from one who reflects and contemplates or wants to gain knowledge through the senses. It has now been established that both aspects [i.e., good and bad] are possible. One cannot comprehend either of these two [aspects] through the senses or contemplation. Therefore, one's judgment in His Law on the indication to it by wisdom and folly, or justice and injustice, is false.[886]

It follows from this that all human beings are ignorant of the knowledge pertaining to the reality of these two aspects of a thing via contemplation. This is just as one [cannot] know all the reasons why the sensible things appear to the senses in different ways. Since this has been established, the dualism of the Dualists has been abolished. Their ignorance is that they do not know the aspects of wisdom in the creation of harmful and beneficial things, because what is harmful may be beneficial in another way [and under different circumstances]. Also abolished is the statement of those amongst the Muʿtazila who say: "Any action that does not benefit others is devoid of wisdom." In addition, something harmful may be of benefit to someone. This may be in terms of guiding, advising, reminding of divine blessings, deterring from revenge, describing God who possesses the creation and command in creatures, or other aspects the mentioning of which would be lengthy. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[885] The repeated phrase "because their cause is ignorance" (*li-mā kāna sababuhumā al-jahl*) on MS. 113r, TA, 297, K, 217, has not been translated here because it is an obvious copyist error prompted by the preceding word "folly" (*al-safah*).

[886] One cannot use the senses or contemplation as the basis for specific judgments of the Law based on general ideas of wisdom and justice. As discussed below, this does not rule out more general ethical knowledge, nor does it stop revelation being used to understand aspects of wisdom in this context. For an exploration of these questions through the ideas of al-Māturīdī, see Harvey, *The Qur'an and the Just Society*, 41-42.

6) Then, the principle of what turns an action in the visible world into folly is one of two factors: either the action consists of the transgression of sovereignty without the permission of the sovereign, or the violation of the command and prohibition issued by one who has the authority to command and prohibit. All of this is negated from God, majestic is His praise. Therefore, He is exalted above the possibility of this description [i.e., folly] attaching to his action. *Strength comes from God alone.*

However, this is not like a lie. For the lie is in no way beneficial, unlike the act which is divided into wisdom, folly, justice, and injustice. In fact, [such qualities] do not change in general, but in respect of their occurrence in a thing by the indication of one of the two matters [i.e., wisdom and folly] according to the change of states and causes.[887] Therefore, one must characterize God Most High as exalted above committing folly and injustice in general and in terms of the [specific] indication too. But it is impermissible for God to be described with folly or injustice in the context in which His deed is manifest just because human knowledge cannot reach it and one's intellect cannot comprehend it.[888] *Strength comes from God alone.*

7) What in general allows us to know that the description of God by injustice, folly and lying is false is twofold:

i) The evil of [these qualities] is known to reason both self-evidently and by introspection. Therefore, the more one ponders, researches and reflects on them, the more distasteful and fouler they become. This is unlike the thing that is distasteful by nature, for it may become good by habituation and by long companionship; such is the case with the slaughter of animals, etc. Likewise, we see that the substances of beasts of burden, predators, and birds are naturally afraid of human beings, fleeing from the various gains and labors desired from them. Then, they leave that through training and instruction, so that they get used to [the tasks] they avoid, and it becomes for them as if it is their inborn nature. However, what the intellect sees as bad never becomes like this. On the contrary, it increases according to the length of reflection upon it.[889] Then, according to this, for one who may do so [i.e., be unjust, foolish or deceitful], his promise is not trusted, his threat is not feared, his good is not sought,[890] and his evil is not made safe. The situation and action of one who is like this cannot possibly be ascribed to the Omniscient and the Wise in His essence, the Independent in Himself.

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[887] The essence and nature of wisdom and reason or justice and injustice never change, but what particular thing is an instance of wisdom or mischief, or justice and injustice may vary according to the circumstances (*Translator*).

[888] God cannot be attributed with the qualities of folly and injustice, which are in general bad, as established above. Additionally, if a certain created thing takes on a quality of folly or injustice in a particular context, that arrangement is part of God's ultimate wisdom and justice, even if one cannot understand how.

In addition, [God has] the attribute that nothing is hidden from Him and nothing that He intends is difficult for Him. Rather, according to the doctrine of the Muʿtazila, God is not safe from these [shortcomings] because most things are excluded from His will. What He does not want under His authority may exist, without Him having any authority to remove it. If He wants an increase in authority and to seize control of it, He is prevented from doing so. For example, if He wills all His creatures to be obedient to Him, and that under His authority and sovereignty there should be obedience and not disobedience, this would not happen. Or, [consider] if God promises a group of people a certain lifespan and that He will preserve them until then, including in His promise that He will provide them with various kinds of sustenance and benefits during that period of time. But then one of His creatures comes and kills them before the term is complete preventing Him from fulfilling what had been promised to them of the ac to keep them alive during that period, which He had informed them about. This necessitates that God is needy and a liar, which realizes folly and injustice. Additionally, [the Muʿtazila] realize for Him the power over wrongdoing, injustice, folly, lying, and every action that were it to be, would remove

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[889] Here, al-Māturīdī argues from introspective experience for the rational necessity of the evil of injustice, folly and lying, and hence of God being free of them, unlike natural aversions, which can be overcome through habituation.

[890] MS. 113v and K, 219, have *khabar* (report), rather than *khayr* (good) in TA, 299. This makes sense – one does not seek the report of the liar – but given the parallelism of the construction, "good" is more likely.

His lordship and strip His divinity. Thus, [the Mu'tazila] put [God's] divinity and lordship under His power and governance.[891] How can one be sure that such [a deity] will continue [to stand with him], and how can his heart be satisfied that in His state He will fulfill what He promises? *Strength comes from God alone.*

Moreover, God is characterized with generosity, graciousness, forgiveness and benevolence. Therefore, in the actions described above, these qualities disappear. [God] is lofty and exalted above that.

ii) The second aspect that calls to and prompts these [evil] acts is need and ignorance. It has been established that [God] is exalted above these two because they remove lordship and governance. The existence of the world as it is indicates to [His] independence and His knowledge to give everything its due right. In this is an indication to the impossibility of this description [i.e., that God is unjust, foolish or deceitful]. Therefore, it is impossible for Him to be described thus in any of His actions. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, since God, exalted is His praise, is characterized by knowledge, power, might and life in His essence – because it is impossible that He should accept other [attributes] – and since [these attributes] are not found in this way [i.e., essentially] in wise people, God's actions do not need to be evaluated by taking the actions of the wise ones in the visible world as a criterion.

The summary of this principle is that all wise people in the visible world are vulnerable to folly; hence the independent, knowing and powerful [in the world] may have the opposite of these qualities, such that one is characterized with them until he is ennobled with their opposites. Thus, one possesses [good attributes] to the extent that they have been granted. Therefore, if one sees folly in a thing, either i) one has been granted knowledge of the reality of wisdom in it, or not; ii) or his [own] knowledge reaches that which perceives its wisdom or not; or iii) what was left over from his previous [bad] attribute prevents him from encompassing it.[892] Therefore, it is groundless for the servant to claim with regard to God's action that such-and-such is not according to wisdom, and neither is such-and-such. That which clarifies this is one's knowledge of his ignorance about most things, his neediness and incapacity in most matters, and his being encompassed by folly in the majority of [his] affairs. Whoever this describes, his plunge into what God ought to do based on the [specific] indication to it rather than adherence to the general case is vain and without meaning. Rational people do not participate in [determining what God should do in particular], because the business of the intellect is to know what needs to be done in general, and everyone has been given this ability. For this reason, God Most High said, "He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned"[893] because everyone else's deeds may be either foolish and wise, but His deeds are exalted above folly. Everyone else is subject to commands and prohibitions, because they exist for other than them in reality, but God is exalted above [existing for another]. Everyone owns a measure of things and a part of them, whereas God owns things as a whole. These and similar things make it impossible to question God. Since this is impossible, responding to it [i.e., such questions] is futile. However, God has promised that He will guide those who strive on His path with His bounty and grace.[894] This requires submitting and supplicating to God, so that He makes him aware of His hidden wisdom to the extent that He would bestow generously because He has power over all.

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[891] See 4.5 (14).

[892] This is a very useful statement by al-Māturīdī on how one may go about identifying specific instances of folly, as opposed to the general level that is known with greater

6.2. Enquiry into Human Actions and their Affirmation

Praise is due to God who is the Singular with eternality and divinity; who is the Unique with permanence and lordship; who possesses illuminating proof and great sovereignty; who created creatures by His power; who disposes of them by His wisdom in accordance with His pre-existing knowledge and will and alternates His creation. He originates things as He

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certainty. The case that he discusses is someone who is wise. Such a person may have been granted specific knowledge of a thing's wisdom or folly, perhaps through revelation; or, if not, they may be able to accurately perceive this through the knowledge that they possess. Finally, their own degree of folly may render this impossible.

[893] Q. 21:23.

[894] A reference to Q. 29:69.

wills. "He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned",[895] because they have the capability for both folly and wisdom, so that they are restrained from folly by demanding then punishing [them], and are encouraged towards wisdom. We ask God to ennoble us with facilitation, renew our righteous intention, and enlighten our hearts with monotheism. He is praiseworthy and excellent.[896]

1) Since God Most High created people for testing, He made them discerning with knowledge of praiseworthy and blameworthy matters. He made what is blameworthy distasteful to their intellects and made what is praiseworthy pleasant. He made them understand that it is a grave thing to prefer evil to good and to be attracted to the blameworthy over the praiseworthy. He called on them, according to their constitution and endowments, to prefer one thing over another, and made it distasteful to their reason that the like of them would behave otherwise. God has made everything that people have oscillate between harm to be avoided and benefit to be sought, so it becomes knowledge for them of the reward and punishment promised [in the Hereafter]. God has created [people] with natures that avoid certain things and incline towards certain things, and He showed them through their intellects the good of some of that which the natures avoid due to praiseworthy outcomes and the bad of some of that which they incline towards due to blameworthy outcomes. Thus, He created [human beings] in such a fashion that they could tolerate things that their nature dislikes, because of the desirable outcome, and that they could overcome [their nature, turning it] from the sensual ends to which it called them.

Then, He put [people] to the test, because the intellects turn away from accepting such things [i.e., those the nature dislikes]. Again, He encouraged [people] to do good deeds and acquire nobility of character by choosing good deeds and avoiding bad ones. So, God tested people with two things: hard and easy, simple and difficult. For they already engage in both of them without being tested because whatever they turn towards and whatever they refrain from goes back to these two [i.e., ease or hardship]. By this [pair], He has made the means that lead [human beings] to the source that raises them to every degree and by which every virtue is attained. [This source] is knowledge, and it is of two types: the apparent and evident, and the obscure and hidden. Through these [two kinds of knowledge], those possessing intellect are graded in ranks according to their degree of excellence in exhaustive inquiry and enduring that which the nature dislikes and the soul shrinks from.

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[895] Q. 21:23.

[896] This is the final *ḥamd* of the book. See the Editor's Introduction.

2) Accordingly, the means of [knowledge] is of two kinds:

i) The first is sensory knowledge, which is the most specific means. It is that with which ignorance is impossible, such that it is the basis for what remains hidden from it.

ii) The second is the tradition,[897] which one knows the truth and falsehood thereof based on the indications of prominent people.[898] Then, [God] divided the transmitted knowledge into two divisions: clear and ambiguous, and interpreted and obscure. This is to explain the extent of knowledge in what it is necessary to avoid and to undertake. Providing interpretation for the obscure, adhering to the clear and applying it to the ambiguous as much as is possible are things that must be known and are of need to those who are tested. On the other hand, [it may be necessary to] leave delving into that [inquiry] when it is possible to be independent of knowing its reality, so that the test is in suspending judgment. Hence, from God Most High testing has two aspects: sometimes by surrendering, and sometimes by searching. The duty of the servant is obedience as much as required by the command.

Since God, exalted is His praise, gathered His Scripture upon the two matters [i.e., surrendering and searching], people who accepted the Scripture knew that it was a truth from God, one that just people were unable to turn away from: whoever adhered to it would be successful and find salvation, and those who strayed from it would be wretched and lost. This is so much so that each group thinks that they have found the clear [verses of the

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[897] Al-Māturīdī here uses the term *al-samʿ*, which in its general sense means "tradition". The usage of this term in this chapter relates to a specific aspect of tradition: nearly always verses of the Qur'an, which come under what he refers to elsewhere as "reports" (*al-akhbār*) in 1.2.2.

[898] MS. 115v reads *al-aʿyān*. It may make more sense to read it instead as a repetition of "sensory knowledge" (*al-ʿiyān*).

Qur'an] and followed them, and that what they have to do about the view of their opponent is either to suspend judgment, or to interpret it according to the view they believe to be correct. Just as they are necessarily divided into sects, it has also become necessary to distinguish the clear verses from the ambiguous ones, so that they can prevent the ambiguous from contradicting the clear. Then, it is known that it is impossible for the Qur'an to be contradictory, and God has characterized the Qur'an as having no contradiction: "Had it been from other than God, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy!"[899] The intellect sees the contradiction between one's pieces of evidence as the indication of his folly and ignorance. This establishes that the reason [the Muslims] divided into sects was not due to the Qur'an, nor was it due to a lack of explanation in it. On the contrary, the responsibility to return issues to the Qur'an and the necessity of following it shows that there is an explanation of them in it.

3) The clear verses only remain obscure for the person who cannot fathom them for one for the following reasons:

i) The inclination of the nature of the body[900] to pleasurable things.

ii) Familiarity with some of what one is accustomed.

iii) Imitation of those one trusts.

iv) Shortcomings in seeking [their meaning].

v) Trusting one's own intellect is so beloved to him that he equates it to the wisdom of lordship without following his intellect to what was given in transmitted knowledge. So, for him, the clear verses become ambiguous.

vi) Shortcomings in research.

These are the aspects of doubt for those who turn away from monotheism even though all things testify to His [oneness]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

4) The principle in this is that God Most High has fashioned the human being according to natures that incline to immediate pleasures, which call their possessor to [the pleasures], and make them look beautiful in their sight. He did this by setting desires in the constitution of man in that

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[899] Q. 4:82.

[900] Here and below, al-Māturīdī uses the word *jawhar* in a sense best rendered as "body".

towards which his nature inclines. [These desires] flee from what in his nature feels pain and fatigue. Thus, one's nature becomes one of the enemies of the intellect in knowing good and evil. What the intellect sees as good and bad does not disappear, nor does a thing change from one state to another. However, that which the nature considers good and bad is in the category of what may change from one state to another through training, which is established by warding off that to which it is familiar and directing it towards what it dislikes.[901] This is best done in a way that nature will accept, as is known in the case of birds and beasts of burden. The latter, by their nature, avoid performing various useful services to human beings. Then, when skilled people do a good job of [training and domestication], they become such that they naturally begin to fear that to which they are accustomed, while what they fear becomes their nature. It is also on this basis that human nature avoids killing and slaughter, and then it becomes easier for one to do these things. That which is perceived to be good and bad by reason perpetually increases depending on its perception in self-evident situations. Therefore, God has not made the inclination of nature but rather reason as a proof. For, although they share the same nature with those other than them who are deprived of sound intellect, [God] has decreed[902] that it is necessary for those with sound intellect to follow what reason considers good, even though their nature avoids it, and to stay away from what reason considers bad, even if it is in the nature of the body to accept it. For the intellect reveals the reality of a thing to its owner, whereas nature (that is, the nature of the body) does not make it clear.[903]

With the nature of the body one cannot comprehend nor represent anything except what is present, whereas the intellect perceives both the present and the absent. Through [the intellect], what is absent is made present to the nature, such that the things that the nature dislikes and likes become as if they are present for it. The testing [of human beings] becomes easier and the difficulties that the nature does not like are alleviated. Statements and expressions are also evaluated according to this criterion. That is, although the expressions may differ in terms of how good and bad they sound, they cannot change facts, because facts are unalterable. An expression can be made in two languages, one sweeter than the other. What is good and real in itself is not different because the words that express it are different. Therefore, the goodness of things cannot be evaluated by the nature of creation and the beauty of expression. It can only be evaluated by the intellect that does not see the good as bad. [Reason] is the basis by which everything should be settled. This is like sensory knowledge that does not change and that ignorance cannot contradict. Thus, it serves as the basis for [revealing] everything that is obscure and hidden. Such is the case with reason, and what reason points to is the basis for every natural thing.

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[901] See 6.1 (7) i.

[902] Lit. [God] has made His pen flow (*ajrā qalamahu*).

[903] See al-Kaʿbī's characterization of this opinion, with which he disputes, in al-Kaʿbī, *Maqālāt*, 213.

From what we have explained about the opposition of nature when ascertaining good and bad by reason, many people have difficulty in perceiving what reason and nature reveal to them, so they think of the clear verse as ambiguous and *vice versa*. As a result, they want to perceive everything in a way other than its own [true reality]. We ask God to protect us from seeing falsehood as truth and truth as falsehood. Undoubtedly, He is powerful, ruler of everything and omnipotent.

[6.3. Doctrines of the Sects on the Acts of People]

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: The sectarian groups of Islam have adopted different views on the actions of people:

1) Some of them [i.e., Determinists] said that actions belong to [human beings] metaphorically and to God literally, for these reasons:

i) In general, just as the creation of everything is attributed to God, actions must also be attributed to Him. Thus, it is impossible for the actions to belong to Him metaphorically because He is the Real Agent and the Powerful such that nothing can incapacitate Him. To regard [acts as belonging to God metaphorically] means removing them from the scope of His power and eliminating them from the reality of His action. In fact, many actions for which the originator is undoubtedly God are attributed to the servants in terms of expression of the actions. For example: death, life, tallness, shortness, motion, stillness, joining, and separation. God, exalted is He, is the agent of all these [acts], and He has power over them. So, the same is the case with [the deeds of the servants]. The ascription of that [i.e., the actions to God] is apparent in the Qur'an. This group has adopted the view that, with respect to punishment, for Him is the creation and command in its entirety, and for Him is whatever He wishes. This is because it is for every sovereign to do what he likes in his dominion. If that is the case, then according to this doctrine, all [human action] is metaphorical.

ii) Attributing the act to other [than God] requires a mutual resemblance in the act. However, God has negated this possibility with His statement: "Or do they assign to God partners who have created (anything) as He has created, so that the creation seemed to them similar?"[904] Since the reality of transferring ownership is neither in the bodies [i.e., the transacting parties] nor in the obligation to pay, such that there is mutual resemblance in possession, then the same is the case with deeds.[905]

iii) Also, if it is assumed that the servant has the power to bring into existence and out of non-existence, this means creation, so the name "creator" is required. Yet everyone rejects that because they say: "There is no creator but God."

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: In our opinion, it must be accepted that actions really belong to [the human being], and this is required by tradition, reason, and necessity, which one would be obstinate to deny.

a) As for tradition, the matter has two considerations:

I) commanding and prohibiting [the act].

II) making threats and promises about [the act]. In each of these contexts, it is called an "act". Examples are His statement: "Do what you will."[906] He says: "And do good."[907] In reference to punishment: "Thus will God show them their own deeds as anguish for them."[908] He says: "As a reward for what they used to do."[909] And He says: "And whoso does good a mote's weight..."[910] [These] and other [verses] affirm for [people] the name "actors (*'ummāl*)", and for their actions the name "actions" in terms of command, prohibition, promise and threat. Attributing [actions] to God, exalted is He, does not eliminate this fact. On the contrary, [actions] belong to God insofar as He has created them as they are and has brought them into existence after they did not exist, whereas they belong to human beings insofar as they acquire and perform them. [This is shown by the fact] that God commands and forbids, yet it is impossible to command and prohibit when the addressee possesses no action. God Most High says: "God enjoins justice and kindness..."[911] If it were possible to enjoin justice and kindness without the literal meaning of action, it would be possible to command something today that happened yesterday or last year, or to command to originate creations, even if this is meaningless in the case of creatures.

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[904] Q. 13:16

[905] This seems to be a very condensed rational argument to support the scriptural quotation. The idea is that in the specific case of transference of ownership one might expect there to be a mutual resemblance between the parties in terms of their possession of the item, but such is not the case.

[906] Q. 41:40.

[907] Q. 22:77.

[908] Q. 2:167.

b) [As for reason], the intellect finds distasteful the attribution of obedience, sin, and the performance of obscene and foul actions to God, [rejecting] that He would be commanded, forbidden, rewarded and punished. So, it is false that the action in these aspects is ascribed to Him. *Strength comes from God alone.*

One should add: God Most High has promised reward for those who obey Him in this world, and punishment for those who disobey. If [obedience and disobedience] were His actions, then He would be the one requited with what is mentioned. Since reward and punishment are real, so is the action of abiding by the injunction and the prohibition. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Likewise: it is impossible for someone to command, obey or disobey himself. It is impossible for God to be named a submissive, obedient, disobedient, foolish or oppressive servant. However, God Most High has named those whom He has commanded and prohibited with all of these. If these names really belonged to Him, then He is both lord and servant, creator and creature, and there is no other than Him. Both tradition and reason reject this. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[909] Q. 32:17.
[910] Q. 99:7.
[911] Q. 16:90.

Again, everyone knows from his own self that he chooses what he does, and that he is an agent and acquirer [of the fruits of his deeds]. Now, if it were possible to reject such things that we know through our senses, it would be possible to reject [all our senses], including our knowledge of the whole world, and this is unacceptable. Such is the opinion of the Determinists.[912]

This is not a view worth explaining at length because it does not have many followers and has no meaning that might be discussed by its supporters. For this doctrine has negated the truth of all speech and actions. When falsity of speech [i.e., determinism] is negated, since the debate and contestation is premised on it, that through which contestation occurs is lost and disappears. Some people have opposed [the Determinists] on the basis that their view falls into resemblance [between God and human beings] in terms of knowledge, existence, being and so on. This consequence would follow were there an intellect [i.e., among the Determinists] that was capable of comprehension. But they are a people who deny the knowledge of necessary things as well as what lies within the scope of sensory knowledge. So, there is no point in arguing with them. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) Other people [i.e., the Muʿtazila] accept that actions really belong to human beings, but they have negated the governance of [human actions] from [God] and removed from Him the power to create them. His will in regard to [human actions] becomes like that which the souls wish might happen, though the reality of things is outside of this. They have argued this with commands, prohibitions, promises and threats: it is impossible for the like of these to return to the one who commands and forbids literally, or for the threat and promise to be directed to Him, as we have already mentioned. In this regard, they have recited the verses of command and prohibition, and mentioned the action, then the verses of requital. These verses are clear to those who read the Qur'an, praise be to God. The followers of this view are assisted through what we have explained about the falsity of the doctrine of the Determinists.[913]

[The Muʿtazila] have said the following regarding the ascription of human actions to God: It occurs in two ways beside the reality of the action [i.e., such that it is not truly God's action according to them]:

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[912] The word used is *ahl al-jabr.*

[913] The word used here is *al-mujbira.*

i) [Attribution of actions to God] in terms of the means from which the actions come into existence, as well as in terms of the injunction to do good deeds and to avoid evil [i.e., actions belong to God in terms of Him giving power to human beings to act and in terms of Him ordering human moral actions]. Sometimes actions are attributed to the one who owns the means, even though its reality does not belong to them. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) Attribution [of actions to God] through [divine] testing by which the states of [human] confirmation and denial belong to [God]. This is similar to attributing to the Qur'an the act of increasing the belief of [believers] and filth [of those with sickness in their hearts];[914] to calling [disbelievers to the truth] increasing them in aversion;[915] to the group that made them forget the remembrance of God [that deed];[916] and to idols the act of leading astray large numbers of people by being worshipped.[917] They are the acts of those people [and not the Qur'an, the call, and the idols, etc.]. Such is the case with the ascription [of actions] to God [though they actually belong to the human being]. It sometimes denotes states, such as deception by the world and its ornaments,[918] because the world elicits the potential of deception in the human being even if it is not capable of acting. Such is also the case with attributing the act of falling into utter ruin to the towns,[919] speaking to the birds,[920] and complaining to the beasts of burden,[921] were they taken as having spoken in words. The same is the case in attributing to God respite [to the disbelievers] and displaying His bounty u]on them, such that it was almost taken as evidence that He was pleased with their deeds. So, they thought that He had ordered them to do what they did because He gave them respite and delayed [their punishment]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[914] Q. 9:124-125.
[915] Q. 71:5-6.
[916] Q. 23:109-110.
[917] Q. 14:35-36.
[918] Q. 6:70, 18:28, 46, 28:60.
[919] See Q. 2:259.
[920] See Q. 27:20-22.
[921] See al-Aṣbahānī, *Dalāil al-nubuwwa*, 326; al-Qasṭallānī, *al-Mawāhib al-ladunniyya*, 1:366.

3) Some of them [i.e., the People of Monotheism] confirmed actions as really belonging to the people, and from them they are considered disobedient or pious. Yet they make [the actions] belong to God in terms of creation, indicating according to what preceded of the ascription to God, exalted is His praise, once, and to the servants a second time. That which is attributed to the servants [i.e., the action] is identical with that attributed to God Most High, and not different, in the sense that it refers to different aspects in the intellect.[922] For example, [one may cite] leading astray; guiding and protecting; blessing and favoring; abandoning or supporting, then increasing in the two aspects [i.e., abandonment or support]; sealing [the heart, the eye, the ear]; facilitating [belief]; expanding and contracting [the heart for belief or disbelief]. It is impossible that these states exist together with the contrasting qualities [i.e., being led astray, etc.] in what is characterized by them [i.e., God]. Rather, the ascription of being guided, straying, being upright, being tempted, being steadfast and deviating is to the creation. In addition, if one of the two aspects exists, the other also exists because it is impossible to attribute what is attributed to Him in the absolute sense along with the ascription of the contrasting reality to Him in meaning. So, it is established that the literal [meaning] of that action belongs to the servant in terms of acquisition and belongs to God in terms of creation.[923] The evidence for this is that the action of God Most High in reality is His creating him. If all [these mentioned actions] were [solely] attributed to [God] in the name of creation, what would be understood from this creation is nothing but origination. Yet the understanding of the one who understands from the servant is [that what is created] is his action and acquisition. For example, we say: He created expansion and contraction [of the heart]; He created straying and being guided, etc. So, it is the same as the first case [i.e., God's creation is to particular kinds of things that mean they are attributed to Him].

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[922] Reading *al-ʿaql* with MS. 119r and K, 228.

[923] In this passage, al-Māturīdī shows how a single action, e.g., a person being guided, has to be ascribed both to God and to the human being. God is the one who has the action of guiding, which is His act of creating the person who is guided, whereas the human being acquires the act of being guided itself. Al-Māturīdī's presentation is set against the Determinist who refuses the human being real acts, and the Qadarī who refuses God the role of the creator of acts.

i) If it was possible to remove one of the two aspects [i.e., that ascribed to God and to the human being] from the literal understanding [of action], the means or the states,[924] it would be possible to remove the other as well. But all of that is metaphorical, not literal, and for this reason opposition to the two views of the Determinists and Qadarīs is made.[925] This is the meaning of the narration about the curse of the Murji'a and the Qadarīs.[926] The former deferred actions to God and did not regard them as belonging to the servant, whereas the latter ascribed actions to Him in the same way as creation is attributed to Him, rejecting the involvement of His governance in actions.[927] The moderate approach, on the other hand, is to accept that both of them are real [i.e., that the action belongs to the servant in terms of acquisition and to God in terms of creation]. Thus, God will be described and praised by what He describes Himself, as He says: "[He is] the creator of all things."[928] He says: "He is able to do all things."[929] In addition, [God] will then be [described] as just and gracious,[930] as He says: "Your Lord is not at all a tyrant to His servants."[931] And He says: "If it had not been for the grace of God upon you and His mercy, you would have followed Satan, save a few (of you)."[932]

The evidence for the necessity of this view [i.e., an action belongs to the servant in terms of acquisition and to God in terms of creation] – even though there is sufficient evidence in what we have said so far – is that the actions of the servant involve not only the states that cannot be reached by his imagination and cannot be appreciated by his intellect, but also the states that his intention can reach and his intellect can attain. Thus, [actions] do not belong to the human beings in the first aspect but belong to them in the second. As an example of the first aspect, we may cite the envisioning of a thing emerging from non-existence and the act occupying a certain measure of space, location and boundary that one would not be able to meet if he wanted to return to it.[933] We may give as an example for the second [aspect] to move and to remain still depending on what is commanded and prohibited. Thus, it has been established that [people's] actions do not belong to them in the first aspect but belong to them in the second. If it was possible that the actions of people belonged to them from the first aspect, despite it being clear that this aspect falls outside their intent, their inability to return to its like, and their group disagreeing on what was mentioned, it would be possible for the world to exist as it is through an agent who is powerless, ignorant, and does not know the measure of everything. Also, it would be possible for miracles to be realized, just as they are, by human beings, even if people did not have knowledge of their like, nor power to perform them. Hence, they are required to believe in the Creator and the messengers based on the things that I have mentioned [i.e., the world and miracles] lying beyond the capability of human beings. So, the same is true for their actions. That is why God, exalted is He, said: "Nothing is like Him."[934] [This verse] requires that the resemblance of creatures to [God] in the sense that I have mentioned [i.e., as the literal agent of their actions] is merely an illustration. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[924] This refers to the arguments addressed in 6.3 (1) i and 6.3 (2) i, ii.

[925] That is, any removal of one or the other aspect is a metaphorical usage of speech, not a literal one. The two mentioned groups both fall into the mistake of making one of either the divine or human aspects metaphorical.

[926] See 8.3 (4).

[927] See 6.3 (2) i.

[928] Q. 6: 102.

[929] Q. 6: 17.

[930] Reading *mufaḍḍilan*, rather than *mufaṣṣilan* as found in MS. 119r and the printed editions, due to the indication from Q. 4:83 quoted just below.

[931] Q. 41:46.

[932] Q. 4:83.

ii) In addition, we observe that the deeds of servants result in both good and bad outcomes. Their owners do not know how good or how bad their actions will be. On the contrary, their own intent is that they result in good and beautiful [outcomes], yet that may not occur, and this is because [God] has made their actions so as to not belong to them [in terms of creation]. If it were possible for actions to belong to [human beings] – yet without them knowing their good and bad outcomes – then ignorance would not make the action bad, and knowledge would not make it good.[935] Thus, it has been established that their actions do not belong to them in this respect. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[933] Al-Māturīdī refers to the impossibility of a human being knowing the precise location of a given act so as to repeat it identically a second time.

[934] Q. 42:11.

[935] Reading "*lā jahla yuqabbiḥu al-fiʿl wa-lā ʿilm yuḥassinuhu*" with K, 230. According to this argument, human beings hope for good outcomes from their actions, but this is only vouchsafed by their creator, God. It seems that al-Māturīdī argues that if it were true that human beings were creators of their own acts, then as by experience their

At best, they may say that [the acts] themselves are like that [i.e., good or bad]. Then the goodness or badness of the act stands in the place of the act itself. Yet God Most High has more right to a thing than its own self, since the thing is unaware of itself. In addition, if it were possible for good and evil to exist without a creator, it would be possible for everything to exist without a creator. This leads to leaving Islam. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iii) We see that acts cause sadness, fatigue, and pain to their actors. It is impossible for human nature to be sad without that which causes sadness, to be fatigued without that which causes fatigue, and to be in pain without that which causes pain. So, it has been established that the actions are saddening, fatiguing and painful. However, the owners of actions aim at obtaining pleasure and benefit through actions. Thus, it has been established that actions are not from human beings [in terms of their creation]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iv) There is a common statement about creation: "There is no creator or lord other than God." Had we made the generation of acts and their emergence from non-existence; their annihilation after coming into existence; and then their emergence from their owners; according to a determination, then we would have made for them a quality of createdness through which creatures are creatures. This requires belief in a creator other than [God]. If we accepted this, the statement of the one I mentioned [i.e., "There is no creator or lord but God"] would be contradicted. In addition, if this is possible, then it is possible to believe [the servant] is the lord of his action, which is unacceptable. *Strength comes from God alone.*

v) The actions of servants in reality consist of motion and stillness according to what is apparent, and God has power over them. If [God had no power over actions], He could not have given [people] power over [actions]. According to this [flawed conception], actions are under the power of God in themselves. When God gives the servant [power over actions],

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good and bad outcomes are not known, there is no one to perform this function. Thus, absurdly, it would no longer matter if one was ignorant or knowledgeable, as in the final analysis the good and bad of actions would be a mystery.

the power leaves Him. In this case, His power has left Him and He is powerful with a power that disappears. A being with this quality is a servant, not a lord. *God alone leads to success.*

vi) Moreover, motion and stillness are not opposed to each other according to what is observable in the [state] they are in; and if one looks at them, one cannot distinguish between them.[936] If it was not for the reality of [their] resemblance, distinction would be possible. If two acts resemble one another, it must be said that the reason for naming one applies to the other. This is the meaning of resemblance because equating actions in the visible world requires the resemblance of the agents [i.e., thus God and the servants are both literal agents].[937] *Strength comes from God alone.*

vii) In addition, the means for the People of Monotheism to know that bodily substances are temporal is that the bodies are not devoid of separation, joining, motion, and stillness. If these states were not literally a creation of God, in the guise of that which flows from the servant's hands, we would not be able to affirm a body and substance that is perceived as it is through the act of God. For [in that case], the acts whose names we have mentioned [e.g., motion and stillness] could exist without God. If we [did not] comprehend by whom [these actions] came into being, then the proof for the temporality of the world would be established by other than God. That is because there is no means for one to bring forth the states that we have mentioned from anything other than Him. Were it not for these states, it would not be possible to know that the world is temporal, and the way of knowing Him with the evidence He established would become invalid. Then, if all [such] states could come into existence through anything other than Him, it would not be known through [those actions] that God is their creator: only bodies are made perceptible by [such states]. Thus, according to this view, the notion that God Most High has made [human actions] evidence for His oneness and a witness that attests to His lordship is false. *Protection from sins and salvation is thanks to God.*

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[936] As motion and stillness are just judgements made relative to the body's state in the previous moment, one can only distinguish between them by considering that moment too.

[937] Al-Māturīdī here proposes that a resemblance of acts between two agents in the visible world leads to applying the same name to each, and hence when God is related to a human being's act, then by analogy He is named as its agent. He is not suggesting that God's act univocally resembles that of His human counterpart.

God Most High says: "God has not chosen any son, nor is there any god along with Him."[938] Then He says: "Otherwise, each god would have taken away what he created."[939]

viii) Then, God, exalted is His praise, placed in every accident that He created a mark to inform of its creation; for the accidents are as we have already mentioned. Of His creatures, there may be the creation of that which unites, separates, moves and makes still, though we cannot see it, just as, from among His creatures, there are those that we cannot see in their substance, though they are visible. These acts are not visible in themselves but are seen and known by the change of states in substances. Since there are substances that are invisible [to us], there may be [actions] that God neither appointed as a sign for that which He created, nor did He remove. So, with this [i.e., with the doctrine that the human is the creator of their actions], how will the Muʿtazila refute the doctrine of the unbelievers, while they are [the latter's] partner in this regard? We ask God for salvation from a teaching with such an end.

ix) Also, every creature possesses deficient power: the scope of its power is [for its own action] not the action of others. [According to the Muʿtazila], God also has a power that does not relate to the actions of His servant. So, the power of God is like any other deficient power. God is exalted above the attributes of creatures. *God alone leads to success.*

x) Again, if it was possible for a thing [i.e., the actions of creatures] that lies within the scope of power to lie outside of His power, and it is not one thing, but more than all creatures, how can one believe in His promise and threat? How can one who hears the promise that He will resurrect him, believe it will occur? [How does he believe] in the statement that if He wished, He could create another world like this one [i.e., resurrection]? For, [according to this view], He has no power over the action of gnats, let alone power over the action of a more powerful being. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[938] Q. 23:91.

[939] Q. 23:91.

xi) God is the owner of all things, and He has His ownership over things not because it has been necessitated, like the ownership of the servant [i.e., in order to possess things needed for survival]. Rather, He is owner in His essence, since He is the creator of everything. The notion that He might not be the owner and lord of the deeds of the servants requires that the servants should be [the owner and lord]. Thus, His lordship and ownership would be deficient. That [needy manner of ownership] is possessed by every creature [who] owns something. In fact, it is greater [for the creature than for God], because he owns his own action and that of other than him, whereas God does not [according to the view that He is not the owner of their deeds]. Once it has been established that God has ownership over everything, one must say that He is the creator [of everything], since the servant does not own [everything]. Ownership of something occurs either through having power over it or through the transfer of its ownership by one who has [power] over it. *Strength comes from God alone.*

xii) Also, man is powerful through God making him powerful. Just as it is impossible for one to know something through another if the latter does not know [it], it is impossible for one to be powerful through another if the latter is not powerful. Is it not seen that in order for one to make someone else powerful over something, one must be powerful over it himself. Likewise, it is impossible that one who is possessed of the knowledge through which he informs others, could not himself know. Such is the case with the point we have explained. Since God's power over [the servant's action] has been established and since it is impossible for that over which God has power to come into existence through another, it has been established that God is the creator of [the servant's action].

xiii) In addition, the world is not devoid of accidents and bodies. [According to the Mu'tazila], each type of accident may indeed be literally the act of someone other than [God]. Thus, the world belongs not only to God, but also to His creatures in terms of origination and existence. This invalidates the belief in the oneness of the creator of the world. However, the People of Islam did not disagree over the belief that the creator of the world is one. The opinion of one who ultimately invalidates this belief, which has been adopted by all [Muslims], is rejected by everyone. In fact, God Most High said, "Nothing is like Him"[940] and "Creator of all things."[941] The statement of the people that results in making [for God] likeness and similarity to the servants is contradicted by this totality. If this [i.e., God being alike and similar] is impossible, then the first one [i.e., the servant being the creator of his own actions] is similarly impossible. On the contrary, it is even more worthy of being impossible because it [i.e., the principle that He is the creator of man's actions] is the means of knowing the second statement [i.e., the principle "He is the creator of all things" mentioned above]. In other words, attributing the world to [God] requires attributing oneness to the Creator; and by that it is correct to say: "Nothing is like Him"[942] and that He is the One, with no partner".[943] If it has been established that He might have partners in the world, He will not have any more right than others that, "Nothing is like Him",[944] since there are things that are like Him, or to be a deity for what He created and brought into existence out of nothingness. *Strength comes from God alone.*

xiv) If God had not been the creator of the actions of creatures, the majority of the proofs He manifested at the hands of His messengers would be nullified. [Again, in this case,] His governance over the world, which extends from the first moment in which He created it to the final point of His command, would have been nullified and corrupted. And [in this case] if His creatures had not helped Him governing [the world's] survival, in making it from nothing and in originating progeny, [it would not have occurred]. All of that emerged and was completed through the actions of His creatures. However, one who is only able to manifest his proof with the help of another's knowledge and action is neither wise nor powerful. On the contrary, such a [being] is only ignorant and powerless. So, it has been established that all the actions of creatures occur when God creates them at the hands of whomsoever He wills and however He wills. *Exalted is His praise.*

xv) Moreover, in the matter we are dealing with [i.e., the creation of human actions by God], analogy is either used or not. If it is not used, the teaching of the [Mu'tazili] opponent becomes invalid, since the senses cannot be used in relation to knowing the Creator.[945] Thus it is necessary to know [God] by [analogy], which is based on inference through the visible world. Then, we see that all the meanings inherent in the world exist in its accidents, which are present in the actions of creatures.[946] Now, if it were not necessary to accept that actions were created [by God], the only way to know creation at all would be through tradition, so it would be necessary to use the meaning of His statement, "[God is] the creator of all things"[947] in every context. For in this case, there would be no way to know the createdness of anything in its own way. Or, analogy must be accepted in the aforementioned aspect. Hence, the servant is not a creator through his acts. So, it has been established that [his acts have been created] by another.

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[940] Q. 42:11.
[941] Reading *khāliq* for *ilāh* on MS. 121v. See Q. 6:102, 40:62.
[942] Q. 42:11.
[943] Q. 6:163.
[944] Q. 42:11.

xvi) One should add: the way to know the agent is only through the effects of his action. Then, belief is the best action according to reason. [It is] the most luminous, the most complete, the most valuable and the most suitable thing for [God's] approval. Were we to say that God is not the creator of [the act of belief], two [grave] matters would supervene upon us:

a) The excellence of the one who worships God with belief and other [actions] over God, because He has created filthy, rotten, foul and ugly substances. On the other hand, beautiful substances [created by God] cannot reach the value of [belief] and worship in terms of beauty and goodness. If such is the case, since it is known that the superiority of two people competing for superiority will be determined by the superiority of their actions, this requires the servant to be superior to God in terms of actions and creation. This is for the Mu'tazila foremost, because they claimed that the act of disbelief is ugly and evil in every way, whereas monkeys and pigs are not like that. So, likewise, the act of belief is better than and superior to all the beautiful substances. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[945] Since the senses cannot be used to know God in the visible world, a rejection of analogical inference in establishing His creation of acts, invalidates thew knowing God at all.

[946] The argument that al-Māturīdī is using can be reconstructed as follows. The createdness of the world consists in its accidents. Human actions share this characteristic. Therefore, the latter are also created, and their creator is God (*Translator*).

[947] Q. 6:102.

b) The reward of [good deeds] is sensual, whereas that of belief is rational. What is good according to the senses is inferior to what is good according to the intellect. For the former may change [and become bad], as explained earlier, while the latter does not. If [the human being created their own deeds], the reward would be limited according to the measure of the one receiving the reward. Yet God has promised that He will reward good deeds tenfold.[948] Therefore, the creation of the act of belief as a good belongs to God.[949] *Strength comes from God alone.*

xvii) In addition, God Most High has blamed those who like to be praised for what they have not done. Thereupon, He made it necessary for His servants to thank Him for their belief and to praise [Him] for blessings. Now, it is impossible that on the one hand He shall not be the creator of [belief and blessings], and on the other He shall demand praise for what He did not do and gratitude for [benefits] He did not confer to anyone. *Strength comes from God alone.*

xviii) Also, the meaning of God's action is origination and emergence from non-existence to existence. However, the Muʿtazila attributed this to the meaning of the servant's action, then also gave the servant the power to acquire [the deed] but refused to give it to God. Thus, the servant became through this greater in power [than God]. For, [the power of the servant] relates to a different matter than that of God [i.e., the servant's power relates to both acquisition and creation], whereas His power relates to only one of the two aspects [i.e., creation]. One of the pieces of evidence explaining [this] is that [the Muʿtazila] regard everything with a [single] kind of action to be natural, and what has two [possible] actions as chosen by power. Accordingly, that is necessary in the first case [i.e., human beings have choice], and that is right according to the Muʿtazila because they claim that the servant has the power to prevent the Lord from His act of negating human freedom. However, they do not consider God to have a similar power, except if the power of the servant departs from [the act]. Yet when it is established [according to the correct view] that the negation of the creation of actions results in [such absurdities] – and such is rejected by both reason and tradition – it is established that God is the creator of all actions. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[948] See "Whosoever brings a good deed will receive tenfold the like thereof" in Q. 6:160.

[949] The argument here seems to be that as the reward of belief is rational, rather than sensual, if the good of belief was created by a limited human being, there would be an inherent limit on the rational reward that it could accrue. Yet from the Qur'an, it is known that ten times the reward for good deeds is promised. Therefore, it is only if the good of belief is created by God, that its true multiplied rational reward could be granted.

xix) Then, the principle is that according to the teachings of the Dualists and Zoroastrians, the creation of the world is attributed to two [sources]. They agree with the People of Monotheism that the wise true God, who has never and will never be unjust, is one, omniscient, and omnipotent. However, some people [i.e., the Muʿtazila] have gone beyond them and attributed the creation of the world to too many [agents] to count, denying the power of the God who the creatures accept in His divinity, to create most of the world (i.e., the acts of creatures). These people [i.e., the Muʿtazila] are more deserving of being blamed than those [i.e., the Dualists and Zoroastrians] who absolve [God] from [creating] evil and ugliness from God. *Strength comes from God alone.*

xx) Another argument put forward by [the Muʿtazila] pertains to the ascription to God Most High the creation of those deeds of the servants that are obscene and reprehensible etc. In fact, the Dualists and the Zoroastrians also expressed a similar opinion about [bodily] substances, saying that some are ugly, filthy, disgusting and rotten [therefore, the Muʿtazila agree with these two groups in relying on this justification]. In addition, the attribution of these things to God – when it is interpreted in the sense that God Most High has created them as ugly and obscene through those who have committed them, as opposed to the beautiful and beneficial in their actions – is not uglier than the statement of one who says that He is the lord of filth, the god of shame and punishment, and the king of devils and sinners. [That is, His creation of evil through people is no worse than His direct creation of evil]. Then, this [latter] statement does not prevent acceptance of the reality of His lordship over everything and His divinity, even if the interpretation of the ascription in the way we have explained is ugly and unseemly [i.e., to speak of God in such a way]. Hence, the same is the case for all that is attributed to Him in terms of the actions of creatures. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[6.3.1. A Critique of the Mut'azili Doctrine of Human Acts]

Now, let us mention [the arguments] adhered to by this sect [i.e., the Muʿtazila], who think of themselves as masters of dialectical theology and specialists in this discipline among the people. This is so that they come to know that they are too bold in their claims and that they are far from attaining even the most general rank among its practitioners, let alone proximity to the high ranks[950] of the skilled among them.

If God Most High wills, let us show those who ponder on what I mentioned that [the Muʿtazila] turned away from the view required by the reality of reflection. We shall explain the verses [of the Qur'an] they hide behind, so that it might be known that they would have gained the good of both worlds if they had examined closely a part of them, let alone obtaining their reality. *Strength comes from God alone.*

One who refuses to accept that the actions of the servants are created by [God] resorts to the following argumentation: First, people are commanded with [some actions] and prohibited from others. In this context, [the Muʿtazila] mention the verses in relation to the command and the prohibition. Now, if we assume that [God] creates the actions of man, it is as if He has commanded Himself and forbade Himself from creating that thing.

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: The following is said to one who argues like that: "Are you saying that the servant is commanded to create belief and prohibited from creating disbelief, etc?" If he answers, "Yes", he clearly states that God Most High commands people to be creators. However, the Muslims do not accept that anyone other than God is a creator, and they have not disputed among themselves about it being permissible to worship the Creator in absolute terms, and about the Creator being the Lord and the Deity. In this case, every servant must be seen as such, a result that everyone rejects. If he replies, "No", it is said, "If commanding and forbidding the servant to act does not entail commanding creation and prohibiting creation, why do you say: If God was the creator of actions, this would entail commanding Him and forbidding Him?" A command to create etc., is not established from the aspect comprising the command and the prohibition.

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[950] Reading MS. 123r as *akhṭār*.

Then, it is said to him: Tell us about belief and disbelief. Are they [not] devoid of being two things, two accidents, two indicative motions for the temporality of actions, two proofs for man's wisdom and his folly, and two aspects of his knowledge and ignorance? Our interlocutor should answer, "Yes" to this question, because all these features exist in [belief and disbelief]. In this case, it is said: Does commanding the act [of belief] and prohibiting the act [of disbelief] obligate the command and prohibition of these features that are in them. If he answers, "Yes", it will cause an impossible situation, because one's act of disbelief is an evidence of his folly, and in terms of its indication it is truth, yet it is impossible for this feature of disbelief to be prohibited.[951] Also, [this is the case] because many [people] do not know these qualities of [disbelief, i.e., folly and ignorance]. Therefore, it is impossible for them to be commanded or prohibited in this aspect [i.e., in terms of folly and ignorance], and they must be helped in this regard. So, it is said to [the Muʿtazilī]: What prevents [the act of belief and disbelief] from being created by God? However, in [these acts], it is out of the question that God commands or forbids Himself to create. Then, the aspects we have explained [i.e., the aspects in which actions are created by God] are sound according to the intellect.

In addition, there are properties of attribution, such as: one thing smaller or bigger than another, better or worse, uglier or more beautiful, superior or inferior, greater or lesser in evidence, weaker or stronger, happening or existent, and other than these from a great number of qualities. None of that can be ascribed with evil or good in all aspects, nor with obedience or disobedience. Therefore, it is possible for [these qualities] to have been created [by God], and in this aspect, they cannot be characterized by obedience or disobedience, good or bad, command or prohibition, or any action pertaining to the action of [the servant]. *God alone leads to success.* Such is the case with the threat and the promise [i.e., the eschatological results of actions are also like that]. We perform the act, and thereby ensue its command and prohibition. The same holds true of reward and punishment.

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[951] That is, the prohibition of the act of disbelief cannot be a prohibition of the features that are in disbelief, such as folly. This is because disbelief is truth insofar as it acts as an indication to someone's folly. As such a truth, it cannot be prohibited. But if the prohibition of disbelief is not a prohibition of the features associated with it, this is a sign that disbelief is a creation of God and not of the human being. In other words, it is only God that is capable of making actions express greater meaning than their immediate proximate values.

Then, the principle in this [matter] is that the doctrine of [God's] creation of human actions is [typically] rejected for three reasons:

1) Either because it is impossible.

2) Or because there is no evidence for it.

3) Or because accepting this doctrine implies necessity and eliminates possibility [in human actions]. In this case, the human intellect sees the command, the prohibition, the promise and the threat as ugly as these are its means.

1) One who rejects the view [that God creates human actions] as impossible must provide evidence for this claim. However, he will never produce it except by taking the actions of the servants as a criterion. [So, he argues] that one act cannot literally belong to two people. Or he may think that the view [that human actions are created by God] necessitates shared action [with God].

i) The first objection may be answered as follows: [The view that the act is created by God] may be understood in various ways, since there is disagreement about it. According to us, the action of God Most High is in reality other than the action of the servant, and the action of the servant is not the action of [God], but the effect of His action. The existence of that which is similar to this is not difficult to find in the visible world. For instance, two people stretching something until it snaps, the moving of an object away from one place by two people. Here, [what is] in the presence of them both[952] is one [action] in which they share, because it is literally both their effect.[953] That which has been moved and snapped is likewise the same. The carrying of [the object] is also an indivisible part.[954] It has been carried by two people whose power is one [i.e., it is pooled for this task]. Although the reality of their two acts [i.e., each holding a part of it, etc.] is different, the effect of them both is one. The same holds true of our [actions, which result from both divine and human power]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[952] Reading *qibalahumā* with MS. 124r and Kholeif, 238.

[953] The important point for al-Māturīdī's theological argument is that in making an analogy from the visible world to the unseen, the two people do not share in the same act, but each has their own act with a shared effect.

[954] This is a rare example of al-Māturīdī's use of the language of the indivisible part (*juz' lā yatajazza'*). It is not in the context of defining an ontological constituent but rather as a way of stating that the action of "carrying" is indivisibly the effect of both human powers and acts of lifting that were utilized to realize it as an effect. This is an important analogy for the roles played by God and the human being in human action in general.

ii) It is not possible that anyone [in the visible world] possesses the ability to give power to another for his action, nor [possesses the ability] to create it.[955] No one is able to perform an action in other than their place, nor in other than their present time. So, it is ignorance to assess the action of God by taking as a criterion the existent actions of creatures.[956] And God is majestic and exalted above His [alleged] resemblance[957] in terms of power and establishing action in creatures.

iii) Another view is that the creation of something is the thing itself [i.e., the act of creation and the created thing are the same]. We have already shown the different aspects [of these two] in that [matter].[958] Hence, the doctrine of God's creation [of actions] is permissible from a different aspect than that of [created] disbelief, according to what we explained in the context of "thingness".[959] In fact, the Mu'tazila claimed that the motion of a paralyzed person is a creation in relation to God, a motion in relation to the servant, and a thing in relation to itself, because, according to them, thingness lies in non-existence and indicates the temporality of body.[960] In disbelief, however, [they hold that] there is a proof of God against the servant in terms of punishment, and an indication, in reality, of [the servant's] folly [so they argue it is not His creation]. We have shown that such a thing is impossible because its like [the ability to create actions] does not exist in creatures, and we have already explained the distinction between the two cases [i.e., it is God who creates disbelief, but it is the human being who commits and earns it]. Thus, one who treats one of the two aspects like the other is heedless. According to the Muʿtazila, that which comes from God to the creatures only consists of originating them after they did not exist, yet this is not the meaning of the action of the servants, which is to apply themselves with concern and effort. [On the contrary] the existence[961] in which we are found along with the meaning that emerges from the servant [i.e., the concern and effort] occur together, there is no point in denying it.[962]

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[955] Reading *wa-lā khalq fi'l nafsihi* as referring to the act of the other, as interpreted in TA, 320, n. 4.

[956] God's action is not limited in any of these ways. He can give power to human beings to act, to create their acts, and to perform actions despite not being located in a place nor a time.

[957] Reading *shabahuhu* in MS. 124v along with K, 238.

[958] See 2.9.

[959] God's act of creating human actions occurs in eternity, but that does not mean that the action, for example disbelief, possesses its thingness while non-existent. See 2.18.

[960] This is the case because the paralyzed person cannot move and so their "motion" is non-existent.

Then, [the following] is said [to the Muʿtazilī opponent] about the thing that does not emerge from the servants, such that its impossibility is necessary [i.e., the servants' creation of their own acts]: Do you not see that were your brothers [i.e. the Dahrīs and Zindiqs] to object to you and say: Can you give a basis for what you say [i.e., that the servants create their acts]? Then, it is impossible for bodily substances to come into existence through creatures, so it has been established that they are eternal.[963] Again, it is not wisdom that the act would not benefit its agent and would not remove harm from him. This indicates that the creator of the world benefits from the world. They also say: The origination of a thing from nothing is not an idea that people [rationally] accept. The thought that the world was created by the One is likewise rejected. If the claim of impossibility necessitates the doctrine of the Zindiqs and the Dahrīs about the eternity of the world, this reveals the truth of the one who says: "Muʿtazilism is a part of Zindiqism."[964] *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) As for the question of evidence [for the belief that human actions are created by God], we have already clarified this for one who thinks and is fair. In addition, there is sufficient proof that the Muslims express

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[961] Reading *wa-l-wujūd* with MS. 124v.

[962] That is, the two aspects of the human being's creation and actions cannot be split as the Muʿtazila claim.

[963] Any act that creates a new bodily substance has to be ascribed to creatures according to the Muʿtazila. But the Dahrī or Zindiq can counter that creatures cannot fundamentally bring the constituents of such substances into existence, and therefore they must have already eternally existed.

[964] In this passage, al-Māturīdī uses various arguments to return to his theme (see 2.18 and elsewhere) that the doctrine of the Muʿtazila, who reject the doctrine that human actions are created by God for moral reasons, leads to that of the Dahrīs and Zindiqs on the eternity of the world (*Translator*).

in summary: God is the creator and everything other than Him has been created. He has power over everything, and He is the Lord and God of everything. In this matter, there is no hesitation [among the Muslims], nor is there an inclination of the heart towards an exception. We will present some of the evidence for this [in the following pages].[965]

3) As for the view that [God creating human actions] requires necessity in them, this is impossible and baseless because everyone knows experientially that he is a freely choosing agent. If the doctrine [of necessity] was possible through the inversion of one's knowledge, this would apply to the whole world. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Now, were you to say: [If the view that God creates the servant's actions] does not obligate any necessity, this demonstrates that no one else's governance has been involved in them.

The answer is as follows: We have already freed ourselves of that implication [i.e., in the discussion of the dual role for God and the human being in the production of actions]. In addition, one may say: [Human action] is compelled in terms of [its] creation, and in this respect, the servant does not produce the act, because he is not named [its creator]. Yet in terms of [the act's] acquisition, [the servant has] a free choice. Accordingly, the two matters are divided, [a point] that we have already explained. Do you not see that the utterance of disbelief is a lie [in terms of its content], but it is a truth in indicating the folly of one who utters it. Such a thing [i.e., the act of uttering the phrase of disbelief] would be a free choice in terms of acquisition, but not [a free choice] in terms of its creation. This aspect of creation does not detract from free choice according to what has been established. Hence, it is the same whether it is the creation of this act [of disbelief] or the creation of the heavens and the earth. For there is not in one an averting of the creatures' act from the creature, nor removal of free choice from them. The same holds true for the creation of [all] acts. *Strength comes from God alone.* Also, naming [the servant's action] as created does not require the quality of compulsion because the power to act has been created, which is a means to render the action freely chosen, not compelled. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[965] The reliance on these general statements from tradition can be used because the principal polemical opponent is the Muʿtazila who accept its authority.

[6.3.2. A Critique of al-Kaʿbi's Doctrine on Human Actions]

1) **Al-Kaʿbi said:** Everyone who is a freely choosing agent is compelled to suffer and face hardship in his deed. Thus, he requires two qualities [chosen and compulsory] in the one thing. Likewise, he claimed that one can know an act without knowing whether it is disbelief or belief, or something accidental, such as motion and stillness, which is the same [as the act]. However, in principle it is impossible to say: "[The act] that one is ignorant about is the same as the one he knows; and the act that one is compelled to perform is the same as one he chooses freely", until various aspects are mentioned along with it. The same applies to creation and punishment, etc. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[Al-Kaʿbī] contested with this point regarding the divine promise and threat. However, since the command and prohibition have been established, his heedlessness in his assessment is clear and his distortion is apparent. Such is his approach to the promise and the threat. *Strength comes from God alone.* Then, al-Kaʿbī claimed that it is impossible that what is literally an act for oneself be a creation for God.

Shaykh Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said: This is due to [al-Kaʿbī's] ignorance about the impossible, and we have explained some of that. Then, he claimed that this [i.e., the view that God created the servant's action] would require rational sharing [in action], since it is impossible for each part of the act to exist separately while [the act] is indivisible. Then, [al-Kaʿbī] objected to himself with the words of his opponent: This [impossibility of each part of the act existing independently] is necessary when [the act] has a single aspect, but it is not impossible if it has various aspects. As evidence [against his doctrine], al-Kaʿbī cites an example of wealth, some of it acquired by inheritance and some by purchase. He also gives an example of his wealth and that of his slave. Afterwards, he answers it at length.

We say, and God alone leads to success: One who ponders on what [al-Kaʿbī mentions], provided that he has minimal understanding and is not intellectually arrogant, knows that [al-Kaʿbī] is foolish. If he wishes, he may make a demonstration with that which [al-Kaʿbī] brings forward regarding inheritance to note his ignorance about the sharing [of wealth] in daily life. Therefore, this [i.e., the lack of knowledge] constitutes an excuse for failing to know how [sharing of wealth] should be used in demonstration, since the right of sensory knowledge remained closed to [al-Kaʿbī]. However, this is an issue: the Muʿtazila have always thought that this [i.e., God's creation of the servant's action] requires that [i.e., a shared action between the servant and God]. Even though [the Muʿtazila] do not deserve an answer on this [issue], let us give them one. What they are trying to say is as follows: "The creation of a thing is [the thing itself] and a thing does not belong to two things in the visible world; everything possesses the entirety of things." For this reason, [al-Kaʿbī] denied that a single act may belong to two agents. Now, if he has no example showing whether [the creation of the servant's action] requires sharing [a single action] or not, his argument that it is required is just conjecture and fantasy.

Then, the principle is that people regard the act itself as the possession of God and likewise of the servant. Again, every possession belonging to someone [i.e., a creature] belongs to both God and the servant. And this does not require a sharing between them in the possession of actions and bodily substances. So, how does [it require] sharing in the matter of which we are talking of [i.e., the actions of the servants]? Feeding, dressing and providing sustenance [to human beings] are attributed to both God and human beings alike, and this does not require sharing. The same applies to our subject matter. In addition, we explained the aspects of the act, but we did not say: "The act itself is common in these aspects", because each aspect encompasses the whole [of the act].[966] Likewise, we did not say for one who knows the act in one aspect and does not know it in another aspect: "He shares his knowledge with his ignorance". Then, what is the matter with [the Muʿtazila] for claiming that [His creation of the deed and the servant's earning of it] is rational sharing [of action]? On the contrary, for those with an intellect, that is a rational falsehood. *Strength comes from God alone.*

All these aspects [i.e., all the features of the act such as creation, acquisition, compulsion, and choice] are based on the view that the creation of a thing is other than it [i.e., the distinctness of the act of creation and its object] and at the same time reveal the falsity of the claim of the Muʿtazila. Then, the following is said to [al-Kaʿbī]: "Sharing" is used in the village for the division of possessions, and in trade for the division of transactions. So, you must say: There is "sharing" between God and the human beings in the world and then in actions, because God has commanded man and rendered him capable. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[966] The aspects in question are its possession by both God and human being, each of which encompasses the entire action in its own way, i.e., as something created, as opposed to something chosen and acquired.

As for [the Muʿtazila's] objection [that if the view that acts are created by God is accepted], He would have to be called "obedient", "submissive", etc., we have already clarified that according to one of the two views, the aspect is different, and according to the other, the action is different,[967] and that each of them will be named by its own name [i.e., God is the creator of the action and the servant is the earner of it. The servant takes the name "obedient" in terms of acquisition, but God does not]. On the other hand, [the Muʿtazila] accept God as the creator of motions and the corruption of things, but do not name Him by it, because it is a creation. The same holds true of the acts. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] argued that a single act cannot belong to two agents by [giving the example] that one statement belongs to one speaker and one report belongs to one reporter.

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: [One statement and one report] can belong to more than one person in the visible world. For example, it is said, "This is the statement of a group; the report that is mass transmitted; the statement of such-and-such people; and the report of such-and-such people." If this is the basis on which he relies, the other must also be possible through it, because through it the other is required [i.e., the fact that one statement and one report can belong to a group is evidence that one action can belong to both the servant and God]. However, if everything possible in the visible world were evidence for the unseen, it would be necessary to distinguish between the action and the statement in the unseen as is the case with the visible world. This reveals [al-Kaʿbī's] delusion.[968]

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[967] See 6.3.1 (1) i, iii.

[968] Al-Māturīdī first grants al-Kaʿbī's contention that an analogy can be drawn between the visible world and the unseen and argues on this basis that it does not support the assertion that a single act cannot be possessed by more than one agent. He then argues that if both statements and other types of actions can both be used in this

Then, it may be said: "God is the creator of everything; He is the creator and whatever is other than Him has been created." But it cannot be said: "God is the speaker of every statement", neither "He is the reporter of all reports", nor "He is the reporter and the speaker and whatever is other than Him are reports and statements." This demonstrates that [statements] and [actions] are not alike. In addition, according to [the Mu'tazila], everyone's action happens through a power that is the action of God; on the other hand, it cannot be said that everyone's statement and report are realized through a power that is the statement and report of God Most High. The following is also said to [al-Ka'bī]: Just as God is not named "moving" because He moves another, you must also say that He is not named "creator" because He creates another's motion. If a distinction is made between [being "moving" and "creating" for the above reason] in terms of generality and specificity or in [any terms] you wish, make a distinction between [statement and action] as well. While the meaning by which God is named "creator" is present in the act of everyone, the meaning by which God is named "speaker" is not. That is why [statement and action] are different. *God knows best.* In addition, to say [that God is] "the Creator" is an expression of exaltation, so every [name] that is more general is more eloquent. On the other hand, [to say that God is a] "speaker" is not [in general, a name of exaltation]. Therefore, [speech and action in general] are different.

3) Let us now mention a few of the reasons for [al-Ka'bī's] denial [of the belief that God created human actions]. Then, the principle is that the reason for the Mu'tazila's denial of this is that they have never seen that one's action has been brought into existence from non-existence by another. And this is the basis on which [the Dahrīs] deny the creation of substances, because they forbid a thing to enter existence in the visible world in reality through the action of anyone. On the contrary, [they argue that] nothing occurs in [the visible world] other than joining and separation. Thus, [the Dahrīs] reject the creation of the substance of things through [another]. With a similar approach, [the Mu'tazila] denied the creation of human

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analogical manner, then it is necessary to distinguish between them. By implication statements in the visible world should be compared to God's speech in the unseen, which is distinguished from His act of creating.

actions. For this reason, [our] predecessors considered [the Mu'tazila] as affiliated to [the view of the Dahris].

Also, this is indeed [the Mu'tazila's] doctrine, because they declare as real "things" in eternity and they declare that God brings them into existence but does not originate their thingness, and that thingness did not come from Him.[969] In this case, according to them, the world has not actually originated from nothing, but from some things [i.e., these thingnesses]. Then, they mention that disbelief and belief are two things brought into existence by the agent [i.e., a human being], but they were not made two things [by them], so they do not belong to the servant in terms of thingness. Then, we do not deny this [i.e., the thingness of disbelief and belief does not belong to the servant]; so, what we deny is that creation occurs due to thingness, and that [denial] cannot be rejected. [Al-Ka'bī] does not require that [a disbeliever] should be punished unnecessarily due to this [view], nor that he should be punished because of the thingness [of disbelief]. Yet he does not make it impossible for [a disbeliever] to be punished because the thingness [of belief] has fallen from him. And he does not make necessary the sharing [of belief or disbelief] between the agent and the thingness in the intellect [and] in existence.[970] Nor does he say that [an action] belongs to two agents in the absolute sense. For [an action] considered in its generality as a thing does not belong to [the human being], only in terms of it being belief and disbelief. This explanation holds true of the motion of the paralyzed [because it is a non-existent thing]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

4) Then, al-Ka'bī said: The agent of sin is not seen as more deserving of blame than its creator.

The following is said to [al-Ka'bī]: The sinful aspect [of the act] no more deserves blame than the aspects of thingness, motion,[971] temporality, and accidentality. [The sinful aspect] is contrary to the servant and God, and is other than them both; it is the proof of God and evidence of the folly of the disbeliever. To blame a thing because of that [i.e., being created] entails blaming for everything named by it [i.e., all created acts], so it would be necessary to blame because of the act of belief and every good deed.[972] Since this is not necessary, it is established that [the action] has aspects [i.e., including its moral property], and to each [agent] is attributed the aspect it deserves. The thing that is wisdom from [the aspect] of God Most High is such because He has made it in reality ugly, foolish, unjust and blameworthy, and it is true and wisdom in that aspect. On the other hand, that action for the servant is folly and injustice, and in that aspect it is ugly and sinful. Do you not see that one who knows the act of a disbeliever [to be good] from his point of view is ignorant, and one who reports it [as if it is good in this way] is a liar. One who knows [the disbeliever's disbelief] in reality, [that is, as bad,] will be knowledgeable and wise, and if he reports about it, he will be truthful. This is the manner that God created [disbelief] and fashioned it as it is in itself, and the servant did [it].[973] On the view of one who sees the creation of something as distinct from the thing itself [i.e., al-Māturīdī himself], there is no meaning to [al-Ka'bī's contention] because the act of God is not in reality disbelief, injustice and folly, and neither is it that which arises from the servant in terms of submission, lowliness, obedience and disobedience.[974] *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[969] See 2.18.

[970] That is, al-Ka'bī does not make it necessary for a given action, here belief or disbelief, to be shared between the agent performing the action, and its thingness as an unoriginated entity. This is true for him whether the action is merely conceived, so the thingness is without existence, or the action exists and so the thingness exists. The reason for this, as mentioned several times in this passage, is that thingness does not even belong to God, let alone the servant.

[971] The inclusion of motion in this list shows that, for al-Māturīdī, it can be understood as an aspect (*jiha*) of a given action. For example, from one perspective stealing something is just a motion of the body. See 6.3 (3) v, and 6.3.1.

Then, we raise the objection [to al-Ka'bī] that he deems someone other than the one who created death and the states of creatures more worthy of the name of the creator than God, who created them, though in general He is named their creator. No matter how much [al-Ka'bī] says in this [matter], there is a response to him in the preceding [discussion].

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[972] After setting an initial response to al-Ka'bī based on the distinction between an act and its aspect (*jiha*), al-Māturīdī returns to al-Ka'bī's conception. He argues that merely to attribute blame because God creates a given act would lead to the absurdity of every act, even obedient ones, deserving blame.

[973] Reading "*wa-fa'ala al-'abd*" according to MS. 127r.

[974] Again, al-Māturīdī argues that it is necessary to distinguish between God's action and its effect to do justice to God's creation of human acts and their moral realities for the servant. Al-Ka'bī's worry that God would be attributed with evil merely because He has created it is meaningless when this distinction is upheld.

The principle is that an act has actually been established for the servant in reality, and he has free choice over it. He preferred and wanted [certain] things, and the creation of [the act] neither deters him from it nor carries him to and compels him to do it. Hence, the existence of [the act] and the existence of [God]'s knowledge of it, the conveyance of it from Him, and its establishment in the Preserved Tablet, the obligation of its performance[975] at the time of its action, and the name that He gives it – when He does not compel him to do it – is good; with it comes the command and prohibition, and the punishment and reward. Whoever denies His creation [of the action] because of this [i.e., commanding, forbidding, etc.], his holding on to such things is an illusion. What this person needs to do is to reflect on the aspects by which the creation of things is known. If it is possible for him to reach the truth, then denial of this kind is only ignorance of wisdom. Such [ignorance] was the state in which he was first created [i.e., in infancy]. If he submits to the one who ennobled him with [knowledge], if God wills, he will soon know [wisdom]. If it is impossible for him to reach the truth, the responsibility falls from him [i.e., to discover it on his own] and all his objections are explained in detail.[976] *Strength comes from God alone.*

5) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] mentions our questions [i.e., of the People of Monotheism on the creation of actions]. One of them is [how to understand the following verse]: "He is the creator of everything",[977] because the deeds of the servants are things. [Al-Kaʿbī] claims that this verse is praise [for God], so the expression "everything" in the verse does not include the reviling of God and the killing of prophets. Second, God has condemned disbelief and punished for it. Yet it is impossible for God [to blame or punish] for His own action. Again, al-Kaʿbī said: We have specified [the actions created by God] through the verses we have quoted [i.e., in al-Kaʿbī's own books].

Another evidence that [al-Kaʿbī uses] is that "He" is not included in that [verse], though He is a thing [i.e., God, as the creator, is not included in the class of "everything" that He has created]. In addition, there are verses [about the actions of the servants] that are excluded as they are specific.

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[975] Reading *muʿādātihi* with MS. 127v and K, 243.

[976] Reading *wa-yufaṣṣalu* on MS. 127v.

[977] Q. 6:102.

Thereupon, [al-Ka'bi] said: Bad things were not mentioned in this [Scripture] in relation to the Messenger of God, only in terms of the [harmful] substances. [Al-Ka'bi] added: On the contrary, it is the statement of the Zoroastrians that God wanted something that was forbidden in Islam. For this reason, the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said, "The Qadarīs are the Zoroastrians of this community."[978]

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: We say, and success is from God: Since the verse ["He is the creator of everything"] has been established as praise, in the exclusion of something [i.e., human action] from existent things, there would be praise for what He does not possess or for what every weak being shares in [i.e., limited power]. That is because was [God] to will the generality of things [as al-Kaʿbī holds], and not create them, then He would be praised for what He does not possess, which is a lie. In the removal of part [of existent things from God's creation], others become equal to Him as the crafter of everything, [so, they] intend no craft for Him in it. This is also false. Moreover, if it was possible [to exclude human actions from God's creation] on the basis of turning to another [i.e., the creature] who acts for [yet] another [creature], so it becomes possible to say: "[God] is not the creator of something". This is on the basis that He is not the creator of the actions of others. If [this] ascribes [to God] blame and servitude, it is established that the former case [i.e., God creating the deeds of servants] is praise and lordship for Him, and in specification [i.e., creating some things and not others], there is a requirement for the former case [i.e., blame and servitude].

One should add: [God] has said: He is the Lord of everything, the deity of all things, and the guardian of everything.[979] It is impossible to exclude a thing from ["all things"] here. Though it is not appropriate to mention Him as specified for something bad, such that it is said Lord of Filth, Deity of the Obscene, Guardian of Devils and Iblīs, and Redeemer of Every Filthy and Disgusting Thing, it is the same as the preceding discussion [i.e., nothing is excluded from the remit of God's creation]. This is the case even if it is distasteful to specify certain things in terms of naming. It is precisely for the reason that [al-Kaʿbī] mentions [i.e., to avoid attributing evil to God] that the Zoroastrians and the Zindiqs have openly said that God Most High does not create anything harmful or corrupt, does not kill a friend, does not strengthen an enemy, does not preserve the devils, and does not give power to anyone who will revile Him or prevent one from obeying Him.[980] We say all this so that they know that the principle of Muʿtazilism has been modeled on [the Zindiqs and Zoroastrians] because, in their differing [i.e., with us], it is from them that they extract the meaning understood from the Qur'an and the doctrine of Islam derived from it. That is why the Messenger of God, upon him be peace, said, "The Qadarīs are the Zoroastrians of this community." If it were possible for a thing to be excluded from the scope of the things created by God, it would be possible for it to be excluded from God's names of praise, such as possession and lordship. Thus, it would be unfounded to praise Him with anything, for He would have partners in the meaning of "everything".[981] *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[978] Al-Kaʿbī seemingly accepts the legitimacy of this hadith but turns it on its head by arguing that only Zoroastrians allow God (in the attenuated sense of their evil deity) to will for evil to occur. Therefore, al-Kaʿbī is trying to label his theological opponents with the Qadarī label due to their ascription of the capacity to do evil to God.

[979] See Q. 6:102, 42:62.

It is surprising that al-Kaʿbī says, "He" [occurring in the verse "He is the creator of everything"] is not included in "everything". When is it that the pronoun "he" in an absolute manner is mentioned for "things"? If this were possible, the pronoun "he" would be substituted for [plural nouns such as] "scholars", "agents", "deputies", "lords", "kings".[982] This is what someone without intellect would say.

Then, even if [the pronoun "he"] is mentioned for "thing" [i.e., in everything] – though this is rationally impossible – "He" being excluded from "everything" does not necessitate the others to be excluded [from His creation] for a number of reasons:

i) God the Almighty has said: "He is the guardian of everything, He is the lord of everything, and the deity of everything." Now, it is impossible for a thing to be excluded from the scope [of this "everything"] and for ["everything"] to be specified with respect to certain creatures, because this requires negating [His] knowledge of the intended thing [i.e., the creature] due to the exclusion of "He" from it.[983]

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[980] See Sahner, *The Definitive Zoroastrian Critique of Islam*, 135-40.

[981] That is, some of the praise reserved for God as creator and lord of everything would belong to those who created their own deeds.

[982] Al-Kaʿbī above argues that "He" (*huwa*), primarily in the sense of God, is excluded from "everything" mentioned in the verse, and that therefore other things, such as the acts of servants can be excluded. Al-Māturīdī is pointing out the absurdity of allowing "he" to stand for plural classes in this way.

ii) ["He is the creator of everything"] is praise for God, and exclusion of [the act of the servant] invalidates it. This is because it is praise for putting everything under [His] power and realizing servitude in everyone. However, realizing [the servant's action] invalidates this [praise]. *God alone leads to success.*

iii) The phrase, which has been directed to others, and to lordship, etc., refers to those others. So, if He said: "[I am the God and Lord of] everything except for Me", it would not imply a specification. The same holds true of the first [i.e., "He is the creator of everything"]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

We have already explained that what [al-Kaʿbī] mentioned about specification in the verses is corrupt. *Strength comes from God alone.* As for the verses he cited, we have shown his delusion about them. His situation in proving [his interpretation of these verses] is the same [that is, unsuccessful] as in this matter [i.e., in relation to the createdness of the acts of servants]. As for [al-Kaʿbī's] remarks that [had God created the servant's deed], He would have cursed Himself and denied Himself, [al-Kaʿbī] has accustomed himself to inventing lies on behalf of his opponents because none of his opponents say that. If God had created the cursing of Himself, he would indeed have been cursed and blamed. On the contrary, [God] has created the act of cursing from the disbeliever as a lie, injustice and folly. This wards off Him being cursed and blamed in reality. As a matter of fact, if one knows the act of cursing as such [i.e., as a lie, injustice and folly], he will be knowledgeable and wise, and if one reports it in this way, he has been truthful However, if one knows the act of cursing from the perspective of the disbeliever, then like him, he is ignorant and foolish, and he is a liar for reporting it in this way. The same applies to what he has mentioned [i.e., the act of disbelief]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[983] In other words, God cannot fulfill his scriptural role as guardian, lord and deity of everything if certain things are excluded because of the concerns over God creating their actions.

The summary of it is that the act [of the servant] is not characterized as a curse and evil in the respect that it is an accident, a thing, evidence for his folly, or a motion and so on. The same holds true in respect of His creation of [the servant's actions, i.e., an act is not characterized as evil in the respect that it has been created by God]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

As for al-Kaʿbī's bringing up the murder of the prophets, then [God] was present in the things that happened to them and responsible for keeping His enemies alive. However, that is not unwise. Rather, [al-Kaʿbī's] brothers [i.e., the Zoroastrians] claimed that the one who did this was unwise. In that case, his answer to them is also an answer to himself.

[Al-Kaʿbī] said: "It was not like this in the time of the Messenger of God [i.e., there was no discussion over the scope of the deeds created by God]". By these words, it is as if he means that it is not possible for there to be divine explanation about something before it happens, and that there would occur no explanation on a subject over which there was no dispute.[984] This approach rejects all the verses of the Qur'an and customary matters. Had the verse [i.e., "He is the creator of everything"] been revealed about them [i.e., the Zoroastrians], it would have been revealed to blame them; it describes that which [the Zoroastrians negated from God, i.e., that God would not commit evil] in the respect that the Muʿtazila negated [i.e., His creation of the servants' evil deeds]. In that case, [the blame in question] applies to [the Muʿtazila], as well. In addition, the Muʿtazila do not act upon this verse due to the aspect [of rejecting] as the basis of their religion the possibility of attributing to God the reality [of the servant's deeds].

So, how can one argue against a denier like [al-Kaʿbī], who claims that reason rejects the view that God is the creator of human actions, that the only way to prove it is transmitted knowledge, and that it is impossible to prove that it is rationally possible by means of transmitted knowledge? Therefore, it has been established that the reality of [the phrase "everything" occurring in the verse "He is the creator of everything"] is related to the actions of creatures [i.e., human actions], and that due to it He is praised in reality in the following respects:

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[984] In other words, al-Kaʿbī denies that God can explain a matter that will later be disputed within the community.

a) Everything has come under God's power, so it becomes clear that all creatures need [Him] in the existence of everything for them by it.

b) It is not surprising that one is described as having power over an action that does not belong to another. On the contrary, even the weak and contemptible deserve it [i.e., on the human level by analogy]. Therefore, it has been established that praise occurs in this aspect [i.e., in terms of having power over the actions of others].

c) It shows the folly of one who thinks that the fact that everything has been created in its present state requires that the Lord also [must have been created] or that the mode in which the act originates from the servants should also apply to Him.

d) God is exalted above praise and blame of any act attaching to Him, since it is in the state of being an effect [of His action]. This refutes Muʿtazilism teaching because they attribute this praise to Him by means of His creatures. Such a one is on the verge of annihilation and experiences the fear of extinction. Our Lord is majestic above this.

Then, as for [al-Kaʿbī's] words about the Zoroastrians, they adopt it [i.e., dualism] because they deny that God creates evil and attribute all goodness to God in terms of both creation and will. This is the view that the Muʿtazila adopt while specifying this verse [i.e., "He is the creator of everything"], and they aim to exclude evils from the scope of His creation. This [i.e., narrowing the scope of His creation] is the aspect by which the Messenger of God likened [the Qadarīs, i.e., the Muʿtazila in this context] to the Zoroastrians. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, the doctrine of the Zoroastrians in the final analysis is better [than the teaching of the Qadarīs, i.e., the Muʿtazila], because [the former] exonerate God, Mighty and Majestic, both from committing evil and from doing things that require condemnation of their agent, and they attribute to Him the performance of good and praiseworthy things. Then, with the very aspect that the Zoroastrians have denied, the Qadarīs interpreted the verse away from its meaning in order to absolve God [from evil], and [thereby] negated the creation of every praiseworthy act of goodness from Him.[985] *We ask God to protect us.*

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[985] Despite their dualism, which al-Māturīdī condemns, the Zoroastrians attribute the creation of good deeds to God. The Muʿtazila, in seeking to prevent God's creation of evil deeds, negate His ability to create good ones.

Then, another deviation of [al-Ka'bī] is that he has asked about the verdict [and interpretation] of the verse ["He is the creator of everything"], and then has turned away from that [topic], occupying himself with responding about the kinds of acts. The reality of it is that he says [God is the creator of things] in general, but not that He is [the creator] of bad things [in particular]. It is as if he says, "God is in every place", but when he is asked, "Is He in the privy and in filthy places?", that is denied. Then, He is the lord and deity of everything [in general], but when speaking in detail about bad things, it is denied. However, when he speaks briefly with such an unrestricted statement, he rejects his own basic principle. In fact, such is the case with our current subject matter.[986]

6) Then, [al-Ka'bī] mentions his statement: "God has created you and what you make"[987] and says: He means by "what you make" their gods [i.e., idols], like His words, "Do you worship that which you yourselves carve?"[988] and "It swallowed up their lying show."[989]

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: We say, and God alone leads to success: The apparent meaning of the verse is that he mentioned the creation of the [human] deed. Therefore, it is not possible to move the verse away from its apparent meaning to another except through an explanation [i.e., based upon Qur'anic verses or hadiths]. Also, [the carving of the polytheists and the fabrication of magicians] are included in the scope of "what you make" mentioned in the verse, and they were blamed not only [for the idols they carved and the magic they performed], but also for their act [of carving and fabrication] because they did it, and then worshipped it. Therefore, it is as if they worshipped their deeds. Such is the case with our present subject matter. Again, even though God explicitly mentions the idols [of the polytheists] in the verse, after mentioning them as "made objects", it cannot be said that God created them as "made objects", unless God creates the action, because idols have not been created that way. Thus, it has been established that the deed was created, so that the polytheists would worship a made, created thing [i.e., a thing that they made, and God created], as mentioned. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[986] The Mu'tazila say that God created everything in general, but exclude human actions, which invalidates the view that God created everything. Therefore, it should be stated in detail that God is also the creator of the deeds of the servants (*Translator*).

[987] Q. 37:96.

[988] Q. 37:95.

[989] Q. 7:117.

Then, another grave folly of the Mu'tazila is that they argue by His statement Most High: "God did not make the *baḥīra*... [a camel that was set aside for veneration by the pre-Islamic Arabians]",[990] and these names of these substances, to reject the creation of actions by His statement: "He did not make so-and-so". These names [in the verse] are not the names of acts, but of substances [i.e., animals], and there is no doubt that they were created. Then, [in the context of the verse that he mentions, that is, "God creates you and what you make"], he reduces the creation of actions to the reality of substances, thus denying [God's] creation of actions. This makes it clear that the Mu'tazila's doctrine is to reject the reports from God and refuse to resort to His governance. I ask God to protect us from such a thing.

7) [Al-Ka'bī] continues: They [i.e., my opponents] bring [the verse]: "Or do they assign to God partners who have created (anything) as He has created, so that the creation seemed to them similar?"[991] as evidence and say, "According to your teaching, your action is similar to His creation." Al-Ka'bī says: We seek refuge in God [from such a thing]. On the contrary, our action is futility, corruption, submission and contempt, while His action is wisdom, righteousness, grace and benevolence. He says: There is not with respect to temporality and bringing into existence from non-existence similarity due to the difference in aspect. This is like the lack of similarity between the knowing, living and powerful because of the difference in meaning. Al-Ka'bī goes on: Thereupon, our action is essentially different from His action. Bringing into existence and originating [of acts] is a meaning that requires similarity, which is only possible in bodily substances through [those accidents] that indwell in them. This is opposed by the following statement of Jahm [b. Ṣafwān]: If the act is attributed [to the servant] in a real sense, a similarity occurs. Then, [al-Ka'bī] said: Strangely enough, when they [i.e., his opponents from the People of Monotheism, such as al-Māturīdī] say that a similarity must arise [between the servant and God] with bringing into existence, they

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[990] Q. 5:103.

[991] Q. 13:16

do not say that [a similarity] must arise for them in the context in which they commit the deeds of their Lord in reality.[992]

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: We say, and success is from God: When God said: "Or do they assign to God partners who have created (anything) as He has created?"[993] God Most High has affirmed similarity in terms of deed, but He negated the emergence of a creation like His own from others, and if the things that the polytheists worship were to create like Him, He would excuse them for their worship. Then, there is no way to see how creation happens and it is known only through the created thing. Is [creation] about coming into existence from nothing and existing without a [pre-existing] source, or is it about acquisition, motion and stillness? Whoever relates the action to the servant in the way he attributes it to God, he will create like [God's] creation, because His action has no aspect other than this. If it were possible to eliminate [the similarity] with what [al-Kaʿbī] said [i.e., the action of God and that of the servant do not resemble each other because of the difference in aspect], there would be no need to prove this difference. For if [the Muʿtazila] wanted to establish [this difference], they would say that [the action of man] is not like [the action of God], because your action happens by performance, which is a kind of fantasy [to apply to God]. Then, [God] continued the verse above and eliminated the possibility of attributing the reality [of creation] to others with the phrase, "He is the creator of everything."[994] So everyone will know that if one were to attribute a thing to one by saying that he created it, he could not do so, because that person has necessities that require another to govern him regarding the thing in question. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[992] Al-Kaʿbī denies similarity between attributes ascribed to God and to the human being. He argues that for both of them to bring acts into being would amount to similarity. This directly links to his idea that the active attributes of God are nothing but the creation itself. Therefore, there would be a competition in the relevant area if both God and the human being were to be responsible for the act. Al-Kaʿbī holds that the meaning of originating acts is based on the indwelling of accidents and hence, while it involves similarity between created entities, insulates God from this accusation. He then contrasts this with the view of Jahm (a known Determinist) that any human action (in other words, any presence of an accident of power in the human agent) amounts to an unacceptable similarity with the exclusive creative power of God. He then seeks to trap the People of Monotheism by suggesting that if their critique is that there would be similarity in allowing the human being to originate acts (given their own view on this being a divine attribute), they deny such a similarity when the human being performs the divinely created deeds. He therefore holds their view to be incoherent.

[993] Q. 13:16.

[994] Q. 13:16.

God, Mighty and Majestic, said: "Otherwise, each god would have taken away what he created..."[995] In this case [i.e., if everyone were the creator of his own action], the meaning through which God Most High has been described in terms of creation would be attributed to everyone, and each would take away whatever came [into existence] from him. This means accepting the existence of other deities, each of which takes away his own creation. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Additionally, there is nothing other than existence in the servants that has come from God, and it has been brought into existence on its own. So, what meaning remains by which similarity is completed?[996] *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, one of the principles adopted by the Muslims is to negate the similarity of creatures from God; for He would have to be temporal in the aspect in which similarity occurs, according to the temporality of the thing. If similarity did not occur due to temporality, then there would not be a negation in terms of the necessity of temporality. In addition, the temporal aspects in bodies are evidence of their temporality, which is the evidence of the originating creator. All of this is a sign of similarity. [Al-Kaʿbī's] statement, "There is no similarity between [God and man] due to this [i.e., the servant bringing into existence]" is meaningless. His statement "this" is [similarity] because, according to [the Muʿtazila], the creation of something is identical with the creature. There is no doubt that among creatures there are such things as contempt, submission, need, shame, blameworthiness, evil, sedition, trouble, corruption, stench, malice, and filth. According to the Muʿtazila, all these qualities are the actions of God Most High, in accordance with their words: "The creation of a thing is the thing itself." Thus, how can these states be denied from His creation? On the other hand, the statement of [al-Kaʿbī] is: "[His action] is benevolence and grace". If Iblīs is His creation according to them, and His actions are actually benevolence and grace, then [Iblis] is good and beautiful, he is wisdom and rightness. These are all very ugly words; it is not permissible to use them unrestrictedly, but only with a qualification that clarifies the intended meaning. Al-Kaʿbī's explanation is like this, and it does not remove the similarity [between the action of the servant and that of God] in this respect. *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[995] Q. 23:91.

[996] God's act is to bring things into existence from non-existence. There is no possible conflict between that and what human beings do, which has no share in it.

As for al-Kaʿbī's surprise [that the People of Monotheism disallow similarity between God and the servant in creating the act, but seemingly allow it in the latter's performance of it], God is unique [in action], whereas similarity and difference only occur between several individuals. The summary of this is that we observe that the act of the servant belongs to God from the aspect of the general functioning of the world. So, it is established that the creator of the whole world is one, and [actions] are attributed to the servant in an aspect different from this one. *God alone leads to success.*

Then, al-Kaʿbī opposes the doctrine of his opponent [i.e., the People of Monotheism] as follows: Whoever looks at the tip of two moving reeds cannot distinguish between one moved by God one moved by another. Thus, it has been established that the two [reeds] are similar. [Al-Kaʿbī] claimed that it is necessary to distinguish between them by investigating the cause.

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: The following is said to [al-Kaʿbī]: Maybe an angel, a devil, or an underground beast is moving the reed! Whatever the cause for [the motion of the reed], one reaches by it to that which belongs to God in reality [i.e., its creation], not to a creature he does not know. This is so it is known that, according to [the Muʿtazila], God is not able to take away His creation,[997] and so it is known that [al-Kaʿbī], due to the intensity of similarity, cuts off the way to knowledge of [God] in terms of Himself, because the cause [of the act] is not distinguished, according to him, from what comes from God [i.e., the creation].[998] As there is nothing other than what one sees, how will he know that?[999] *Strength comes from God alone.*

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[997] The reference is to Q. 23:91: "There is no other god with Him. Otherwise, each god would have taken away what he created…" Al-Māturīdī is alluding to a conflict with the Qur'anic emphasis on God's unassailable right over His creation.

[998] In other words, things have their worldly causes, as already shown, but this operates at an entirely different level than God's action, which is to timelessly create the visible effect from nothing.

[999] Al-Māturīdī argues that al-Kaʿbī is conceptually confused. By failing to separate God's action from the creation itself, he makes some things within the world the action of God and other things the action of human beings with no way to distinguish between them.

[Al-Kaʿbī] further states: This is like one who makes inference from the visible world: maybe he cannot distinguish between the eternal and the temporal, because he does not look from the right aspect. The same applies to [the example of the two reeds].

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: These [two examples] work against [al-Kaʿbī] in two ways:

i) In [the example of the reed], it is impossible to reach the cause [that shakes the two reeds] and to know it in reality. Besides, there is nothing that belongs to God except what we see [that is, the shaking of the reeds] so that God may be known through it. Hence, this example does not make any sense.[1000]

ii) That for the one objecting to [the distinction between the temporal and eternal] it it is not possible [from] one aspect indicates that [his lack of knowledge of] the temporal and eternal is only because he cannot see it, he remains heedless of it, and he cannot discern the site of indication.

[The worldly state that] we are in is not what distinguishes [between the act of God and the act of human beings]. If it was, then [the situation] would be otherwise. This establishes that the two [e.g., reeds], in respect to themselves, are similar.[1001]

Then, al-Kaʿbī continues his objection as follows: How can one know [i.e., through reflection and inference] an acquired action from another action that is not like that [i.e., an action belonging to God]?

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: This objection is that the acquired act resembles one that is not in such a way that the truth of neither of them is known, hence it has been established for this reason that both are created [i.e., the act of the human being and God respectively]. Instead [we argue], it [i.e., this argumentation] is not made to identify the acquired action of [the servant], but to identify His action that He did not reveal in His creatures. I do not negate what belongs to Him from Him, nor do I attribute to Him what does not belong to Him, nor do I make up lies in His name, which is disbelief. According to the doctrine of the Muʿtazila, however, there is no way to know [what belongs to God,] so one remains in doubt forever and cannot reach that knowledge. This is the meaning of His negation of the coexistence of another deity with Him. The People of Muʿtazilism have accepted [another deity] foolishly and ignorantly. This is indicated in His statement: "Otherwise, each god would have taken away what he created."[1002] *God alone leads to success.*

[1000] The particularities of causal activity are not known, so al-Kaʿbī builds his argument on baseless speculation. In any case, the aspect that is attributed to God's action – the creation of the shaking reeds – is clear.

[1001] One may summarize al-Māturīdī's argumentation as follows: al-Kaʿbī has said above that the action of the human being and the action of God are not epistemically distinguishable (for instance, in the example of the two reeds), but are ontologically different, as they have different causes. Al-Māturīdī points out that there is no ontological difference between the action of the human being and that of other created things in terms of their relation to the action of God; they are all equally the effects of God's action.

Then, [al-Kaʿbī's] discourse reaches [the following point]: the createdness of motion cannot be known through motion itself. Thus, this [rule] is necessary for all accidents, such as joining and separation, and as a result, evidence for His creation is negated from each of them. Then, there is no way to know the reality of bodily substances without [accidents]. In this case, it is as if God did not provide any evidence for His creation such that [substances] came into existence without God ever creating them. This is a doctrine that even the Devil cannot imagine; perhaps one of his friends can reach this level by obeying him! We ask God to protect us from such a thing. According to [al-Kaʿbī's] doctrine, a thing does not indicate God. On the contrary, if its cause is known, it indicates that bodies do not have the property through which God, exalted is He, is known. [Al-Kaʿbī] also said: One of the important things on which they [i.e., the People of Monotheism] have agreed is that the evidence of the createdness of the body is its temporality. Likewise, [according to them] every temporally originated thing leads to this [i.e., its creation]. And [al-Kaʿbī] demanded proof [for this, i.e., temporal origination requires creation] and he supported [this demand] by the fact that one may know the temporally originated thing without knowing [the concept] of creation [i.e., God creating things from nothing].

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: We say, and God alone leads to success: The People of Monotheism only spoke of the origination of the world and affirming its originator, and no one has additionally needed to take the trouble to say that the world was created and had a creator.[1003] If [the Mu'tazila] did not consider [the temporality of the world] to be sufficient to prove [the createdness of the world] and did not accept its temporality as a convincing proof for its createdness, they would create like Him because everyone needs Him, which is impossible. Also, [al-Ka'bī] argued by the division of the Qur'an into parts and divisions [i.e., suras and verses] as evidence for its createdness. So, the same holds true of all existent accidents. Thus, the same judgment is required about them [i.e., just as he argued that God creates the accidents of the Qur'an, he should accept the same is true for other accidents].[1004] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1002] Q. 23:91.

8) Then, [al-Ka'bī] argues against [the People of Monotheism] with the creation of evils and diseases, harmful as they are: Why do you not say this about disbelief [i.e., that it must be attributed to God like other harms]?[1005]

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: This is not a question with which one begins a discussion; rather it is a counter-argument.[1006] Since the creator of these things [i.e., evils and diseases], is not named by these things, it is necessary that He is named by His creation of the actions of the creation with their names [e.g., God is the "creator of the killer's act", but He is not "the killer". This [i.e., creation] is indeed a kind of action in which no one's action other than God's is involved, whereas in evil acts, another's action [i.e., the human being's] is involved.

[Al-Ka'bī] replied that these things [i.e., evils and diseases] are not evil when looked at from the point of view of wisdom. On the contrary, they are mercy insofar as they remind of repentance and prevent from sin. Disbelief, however, is not wisdom in any aspect. Do you not see that, while it is impossible for disbelief to be created without it coming from someone, it is possible for [evil to be so created]?

[1003] Al-Māturīdī takes it as rationally self-evident that if the entire world is originated (coming into existence from nothing), it must be created, and therefore have a creator.

[1004] The point is not that al-Māturīdī accepts the creation of the Qur'an. Rather, he is pointing out that the present line of argument, that accidents do not indicate God's creation of them, is inconsistent with al-Ka'bī's own view about God's creation of the Qur'an.

[1005] Al-Ka'bī again tries to ascribe the responsibility for the evil acts of human beings to God if He is their creator.

[1006] The reason for this is that al-Ka'bī is relying on the fact that his opponent accepts that God creates everything.

Abû Manşûr (may God have mercy on him) said: The first [that is, the creation of evils according to wisdom] is cited against [al-Ka'bī] with regard to the creation of the act of disbelief as bad. It reminds one who witnesses it of the gravity of his action, and thus one takes refuge in God to protect him from it. Then, [disbelief] reminds one of the temporality of his own actions, calling him towards monotheism. Next, through [disbelief], God acquaints one with the folly and sinfulness of one who commits it, informing him of his name [i.e., believer or disbeliever] and end. So, it informs him that he cannot harm the creator. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[Al-Ka'bī's] statement: "[God] does not create [disbelief] without it coming from someone" is the speech of one who does not understand what he is saying. Disbelief is the name of the servant's act. Therefore, how can disbelief exist without a servant? This is like the statement of one who says: "Motion is departure of the body, and [God] does not create [motion] without [a body]." Thus, the creation of [disbelief] by God is a wisdom. All accidents and explanation of creation is on this basis. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, it is impossible for God to create diseases without them being for someone or another. Hence, it is not impossible to find the wisdom of [diseases]. The same applies to the [disbelief] that [al-Ka'bī] mentions. *God alone leads to success.*

9) Then, [al-Ka'bī] objects to himself, saying: If you possess the power to bring accidents into existence from nothing, why is it impossible for you to do the same in relation to bodies?[1007]

Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said: This is not the way the question should be articulated, but rather the meaning of the creation of a body is nothing but its emergence from non-existence and its existence after it did not exist. You have described yourself in terms of the action of accidents. How is it impossible [for you] to be described as creating a body, when there is no extrinsic factor?[1008] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1007] Al-Ka'bī seems to recognize that he needs to account for how, on his view, the human being can bring accidents into existence when they create their own acts but cannot thereby create bodies.

[1008] Al-Māturīdī points out that al-Ka'bī has denied the role of God in bringing the accident into existence. By extension, there is no coherent reason why this should not be extended to bodies.

He has answered with the act [i.e., that only the action can be created by the human being]. But this answer is baseless because in relation to our deed we do not say that it has the aspect that brings about the body's existence and being, such that this claim can be forced upon us [i.e., we do not need to claim that we can create bodies, since we do not claim that we have created accidents]. However, they [the Muʿtazila] attribute [to themselves the aspect of creation of their actions], so they should be able to say that [they have also created bodies]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, [al-Kaʿbī] said: Zayd's action consists of acting through power. You also act through power. So, why is it that you are unable to perform Zayd's action? It is answered as follows: Because Zayd does not make us capable of performing his action, so we cannot perform it. But God has given you power over the determinant cause by which a body comes into existence. So, what we say in response to you [i.e., that according to your position you should be able to create bodies] is required of you. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[Al-Kaʿbī] said: [The opponent] has taken the fact that, if a writer or painter wants to make a second writing or painting identical to his first one, he is unable, as an indication that he cannot produce the initial one. First of all, [al-Kaʿbī] claimed that it is possible [for the second writing and painting to be the same as the first] through God granting that power [to the writer and painter]. If it is said "So, why is it that he does not produce its likeness?", [al-Kaʿbī] responds: Because even if we act with that power [during the second action], we act with causes, such as the intellect, memory and types of concern, which do not come together as a whole [in the same way the second time]. He goes on to say: Were another originator required because of this [i.e., because the second painting was not like the first], another painter would have been required. [Al-Kaʿbī] objected by means of the act: The incapacity [to repeat the act in the same way] does not indicate that it is not us who perform it. If being unable [to repeat the act in the same way] indicated what they said [i.e., it is not us who committed the act], the second act, if it was better, would show that the first one belongs to him.[1009] Then, al-Kaʿbī objected by asking what prevents [an action from being repeated in the same way]. So, he said [in response]: Because we perform an act through instruments, power, exertion and thinking, and these are not equal. If they were equal, we could repeat an act in the same way.

[1009] By means of an *a fortiori* argument.

[Al-Kaʿbī] is replied to as follows: Now, the aspects that prevent you [from repeating an action in the same way], are they your action or not? If [al-Kaʿbī] answers, "No", to this question, he will be making a huge admission by accepting that his exertion and thinking, etc., are from God, because whereas he used to deny that they were created, he now affirms it. If [al-Kaʿbī] answers, "Yes", the question in regard to all of these [i.e., the aspects that prevent an action from recurring in the same way] is as follows: the Qadarīs [i.e., the Muʿtazila] have claimed that if God would continue [these aspects] for the act, [then one could repeat an action exactly in the same way]. In fact, God has continued them, and all of these are actions that depend on power. So, why is it that [these aspects] are not equal, even though you want them to be equal and you have the power? Thus, this clearly reveals that the act in question has occurred outside of your determination. As for what [al-Kaʿbī] mentions that it is clear evidence that one performing an action better the second time indicates that the first action [belongs to the same person]; on the contrary, it equally indicates that the first action does not belong to the same person. In addition, no one's knowledge can determine the measure that his motion occupies in air and place, nor can it determine how far his hand moves up and down, no matter how hard he tries. Yet, action does not happen without it. Hence, it has been established that the action belongs to other than the human agent in this aspect. *Strength comes from God alone.*

On the other hand, no one wants his action to turn out badly, but sometimes it does. Thus, it has been established that the action does not belong to the human agent in this aspect. If it is possible for the action to occur in an aspect that one does not know or does not want, no matter how hard he tries to know its limit and outcome, and no matter how hard he tries to perform it as he likes, the like of this is possible in the whole world and [even] in the miracles of the prophets, etc.[1010] The statement about the painter is like the statement about one performing the action, the statement about the painting is like the statement about the action, there being no difference between the two.[1011]

[1010] The point is that if an action does not turn out as the human being wants even once, which is obviously the case, then this is possible everywhere, invalidating the idea of the human being as its creator.

As for [al-Kaʿbī's] statement, "If God had continued the existence of power", since according to his teaching, the existence of power would not last for two moments, this statement is meaningless. Then [al-Kaʿbī] continued his objection by saying: "The action is what one chooses, knows that he performs and intends, so it belongs to the human agent in this aspect." We have explained in this matter that one does not know [the action] in that aspect. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[6.4. Scriptural Evidence for the Creation of Actions]

In our opinion, the evidence from the Qur'an that necessitates belief in the creation of actions [by God] is His statement: "And keep your opinion secret or proclaim it, lo! He is Knower of all that is in the breasts (of men). Should He not know what He created? And He is the Subtle, the Aware."[1012] Had He not been, majestic is His praise, a creator for what is revealed and concealed, He would not have provided this fact as evidence for His knowledge. On the other hand, it is possible for one to be ignorant about what one has not done. Therefore, it would be meaningless to provide evidence through the actions of someone else. Again, God Most High said: "He is the one who makes you travel on land and the sea..."[1013] Elsewhere, He said: "[And We set, between them and the towns which We had blessed, towns easy to be seen], and made the stage between them easy, (saying): Travel in them safely both by night [and day]."[1014] [God] has informed that to determine travelling and cause it to happen is His own action and that the act and agent of travelling come into existence through Him. He also said: "And of His signs is this: He created for you spouses from yourselves..."[1015] In [this verse], we are informed that God has made love and mercy from His signs.

[1011] That is, the human being cannot make the same painting twice, showing that this activity is not free of God's creation.

[1012] Q. 67:13-14.

[1013] Q. 10:22.

[1014] Q. 34:18.

[1015] Q. 30:21.

Likewise, it is one of His signs that you sleep;[1016] and "your seeking of His bounty"[1017] is from his signs. It is very far-fetched that another would create signs for [God] because it is more appropriate for the sign in question to be for the agent, yet all those signs are the acts of creatures. Again, God said: "And we placed compassion and mercy in the hearts of those who followed [Jesus]..."[1018] He also said: "He has written faith upon their hearts";[1019] "And God has given you houses from the hides of cattle";[1020] and: "We made hard their hearts."[1021] As a general expression, God said: "[Your Lord] is doer of what He wills."[1022] Of the deeds of the servants, there are things that He wills, and He has promised to do whatever He wills. Again, God blamed those who loved to be praised for what they did not do and made it necessary for believers to praise Him because they believed. Therefore, it has been established that this [i.e., the belief of the servants] is realized through His action. *Strength comes from God alone.*

The principle in this matter is as follows: the fact that every human being's action has been created constitutes greater proof for one than the fact that the heavens and the earth have been created in terms of the reality recognized by the intellect. For no one has tested the powers of the substances of the world, so that he knows nothing can create the like of itself.[1023] On the contrary, he knows this [i.e., a thing's inability to create the like of itself] based on the impossibility of creating a being like himself. In addition, as is known, some of the features that are absent in human beings exist in other substances [i.e., animals], such as flying, piercing things [e.g., with a beak or claws], and swimming [e.g., with fins]. The substances in question can do these and similar things through their own powers, yet everyone knows that no creature has governance over its actions.[1024] Therefore, everyone necessarily knows that his action exceeds his own pupose, falls short of the limit that delimits him, and is determined in a way that he cannot determine. Thus, one necessarily knows that the cause of the things that occur in himself is one [i.e., God] who determined and brought into existence those things as He willed. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1016] Q. 30:23.
[1017] Q. 30:23.
[1018] Q. 57:27.
[1019] Q. 58:22.
[1020] Q. 16:80.
[1021] Q. 5:13.
[1022] Q. 11:107, 85:16.
[1023] Reading *khurūj kull shay' 'an iḥtimāl khalq mithlihi*, rather than *khurūj kull shay' 'an dhālika [wa]-iḥtimāl khalq mithlihi*, as found in both K, 255, and TA, 341 (*Translator*).
[1024] The Mu'tazila concede that God governs the action of animals.

Moreover, according to the Mu'tazila, nothing came from God to His creatures except His bringing them into existence after they did not exist [i.e., there is no distinct act of creation from God], and God is eternally existent. This meaning [i.e., to be created by God after non-existing] is present in everyone's actions. If there were no command and prohibition, the intellect could not accept that a thing should be removed from the scope of His power and that a thing should be attributed to another's action. The command and prohibition are a reality with the meaning that they necessitate this doctrine [i.e., the creation of acts by human beings]. If had it not been for [the command and prohibition], this would not have been the case. So, what is known and deemed necessary by the intellect would have been denied due to ignorance of wisdom and that which occurs.[1025] If this was possible, the command and the prohibition could be rejected due to the intellect's affirmation of God's power over everything [i.e., such that everything is His act and there would be no sense to reward and punish].

On the contrary [according to the People of Monotheism], His power to create things from nothing or originate substances without any precedent are more extraordinary than the creation of another's actions. For if one other than God had the power to do that, no rational person would hesitate to attribute it [i.e., the action] to [that person]. On the other hand, the power of the servant [to perform an action] cannot possibly negate the power of God to perform the same. Otherwise, He would have power over it not by Himself, but through another [i.e., the servant]. *God is greater and exalted above that.*

[1025] Reading *bi-l-ḥādith* with MS. 134r and K, 256.

[6.5. Power and Capacity]

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: In our opinion, the principle is that which is called "power" is of two types:

1) The healthiness of means and the soundness of instruments [i.e., of the intellect and limbs etc.], which precede the actions, and even though actions do not occur without them, their reality is to not be created for the latter alone. Rather, they are blessings that God bestows upon whom He wills. Then, when people receive these blessings and their intellects grasp them, God demands that they give thanks for them because this is the due right of the intellects[1026] regarding themselves. This [due right] consists in being grateful to the one who gives blessings and knowing the reality of blessings, while avoiding being ungrateful to those who give blessings and being unaware of their reality. If this were not the case – unless the necessity of gratitude and avoiding ingratitude pre-existed in the intellect – no one could be commanded with gratitude and prohibited from ingratitude in the first place. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) As for the second sense [of power], the only explanation that one may make as to its definition is as follows: [this power] only belongs to the action such that when it exists in a state, the action necessarily occurs with it; and according to some people [the power] precedes [the action]. What I mean here is the act of choice, by which there is reward and punishment, and by which the action is made easy and light. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, the proof that there are two types of ability (*istiṭāʿa*) is the statement of God Most High: "And for him who is unable to do so (the penance is) the feeding of sixty needy ones"[1027] and how He reproached the one who said: "If we had been able, we would surely have set out with you…"[1028]

i) There are many pieces of evidence that the ability [that renders the servant responsible for the command and prohibition] is not the ability of action, but the ability of means and states. One of them is His statement: "And for him who is unable to do so [(the penance is) the feeding of sixty needy ones]."[1029] [What one is unable to do here] is fasting for two months; no one knows that the power of action shall not come to him during that period [i.e., for two months]. Therefore, it is established that what is meant by that "ability" is the existence [of means and states]. The same is true of the hypocrites, who are unaware of the ability by which actions take place [i.e., because they do not believe in God]. By [the declaration, "If we had been able we would surely have set out with you"],[1030] they only meant sickness or lack of money, as God Most High has clarified with His statement: "Not unto the weak [nor unto the sick nor unto those who can find naught to spend is any fault]" until: "Blame is only against those who ask for leave of you (to stay at home) when they are rich..."[1031]

[1026] Reading *al-ʿuqūl* with MS. 134v.

[1027] Q. 58:4.

[1028] Q. 9:42.

Another evidence [in this matter] is the well-known doctrine that the ability from which [the act of fasting] comes into existence does not last with the agent for two months; and the ability to perform jihad does not last from the time [the hypocrites] are in Medina until they encounter the enemies of God. Rather, [this ability] is revived and renewed. In fact, they were obliged to leave [Medina for jihad] before they knew if the ability would be renewed or not.[1032] And they lied by saying, "If we had been able, we would surely have set out with you",[1033] affirming the negation of ability at the outset. Thus, it has been established that the intent of this is not the ability of actions, but the ability of states and means.[1034] *Strength comes from God alone.*

One should add the following: it is impossible for God Most High to condemn a people for obstinacy in a matter that He knows they do not know, and for which the evidence has not become clear for them. None of the common people can conceive in their imagination the power of actions that is mentioned with such expressions as "together", "before", "endures" and "does not endure", and nor can they comprehend them with their intellects. Therefore, the exemption [of the weak from fasting] and the condemnation of the hypocrites may obtain for the matters that are perceived and known. His statement supports this notion: "And whosoever is not able to afford [to marry free, believing women, let them marry from the believing maids whom your right hands possess]."[1035] And His statement: "And pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto God for mankind, for him who can find a way thither."[1036] There is a consensus that this kind of [ability of means and states] is necessary for [the servant to be responsible to] the divine address; that it is an ability for which one who does not have it will not be condemned if he abandons the [commanded] act; and that the servant will not be held responsible unless it is fully realized. Therefore, His statement is interpreted in this sense: "God tasks not a soul beyond its ability."[1037] And His statement: "[God asks naught of any soul] save that which He has given it."[1038] And: "The duty of feeding and clothing nursing mothers in a seemly manner is upon the father of the child. No-one should be charged beyond his ability..."[1039] [Ability] is mentioned in the context of means and states, not the performance of actions.

[1029] Q. 58:4.

[1030] Q. 9:42.

[1031] Q. 9:91-93.

[1032] Therefore, it is the capacity of means and states, which applied to them when they were still in Medina.

[1033] Q. 9:42.

[1034] The hypocrites lied in negating their ability to perform jihad. That means that, in reality, they had such an ability. As they were still in Medina, it could not be the ability that causes the action, but rather the ability of means and states.

The doctrine of all those who attribute the actions to the servants is understood in these terms [i.e., the belonging of the action to the servant depends on the servant's ability in terms of means and states]. This view may be grounded in two ways:

a) The impossibility of commanding the servant to use a means that he does not have. For example, commanding a blind person to see and an amputee to extend his hand.

b) Commands and prohibitions in the context in which the servant is asked to show gratitude and avoid ingratitude. Therefore, no commands or prohibitions are made in the context in which the blessing is not clearly seen and the capacity for it to be known is not possible.[1040] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1035] Q. 4:25.

[1036] Q. 3:97.

[1037] Q. 2:286.

[1038] Q. 7:65.

[1039] Q. 2:233.

[1040] In other words, commands and prohibitions cannot be linked to the accidental power of actions, as it cannot be seen.

ii) As for the other type of ability [i.e., the ability to act], its evidence is His statement, Most High: "They could not bear to hear..."[1041] Additionally, the words of Moses' companion: "You cannot bear with me." [1042] Then, Moses' companion said: "Such is the interpretation of that wherewith you could not bear."[1043] [In the verse, Moses' companion] accepted [the availability of] the power of states, but denied [the power of action, i.e., he said "you cannot bear"] because the actions did not occur [i.e., the power of action was not realized]. The same is meant by His statement: "So keep your duty to God as best you can,"[1044] and other [verses].

Then, [as opposed to the power of means and states], the evidence that [the servant] must be liable without this kind of power of action being available is tradition and reason. As for the tradition, it is the verses that I have mentioned that command, forbid and condemn, despite the negation of the ability of action, and this is the only basis that is comprehensible to the intellect. This point is also clarified by His statement Most High: "And pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto God for mankind, for him who can find a way thither."[1045] As it is known, in order to be able to perform the acts [and rituals of the pilgrimage], one must find provisions and a mount. If [the pilgrimage] had been obligatory only in the presence and existence of power, that is, the power of action, [the pilgrimage] would not have been obligatory for anyone because the power of action originates at the origination of moments. Thus, pilgrimage would not be obligatory until [the time of its performance] arrives. However, this will only come by traveling [to the site of pilgrimage]. In this case, the servant may hold off [from the duty of pilgrimage] because pilgrimage is not [yet] obligatory. The same holds true of the command to set out for jihad. For, if the servant had known that the power of the means he had did not reach him, it would not have been obligatory for him to set out [for jihad]. And it is known that the power of action after reaching [the site of jihad] is not with him in his [initial] state. Yet, it became obligatory for [the servant] to join the jihad because the one staying behind was condemned [i.e., such a servant was commanded to join the jihad because he had the power of means for the jihad, but not the power of action]. Likewise, we see that [the servant] may be exempted from the obligation of standing in prayer, fasting] and similar [ritual acts] with a substitution [such as praying sitting and paying an expiation for fasting]; whereas the power that realizes the action can only exist through effort. Thus, it has been established that duties become obligatory not through [the power of action], but through the [power of] states. This applies to all rituals of worship. One who knows that he does not have the means to complete prayers, fasting and pilgrimage is not obliged to perform [those acts of worship] from the outset of [the ritual].

[1041] Q. 11:20.
[1042] Q. 18:67.
[1043] Q. 18:82.
[1044] Q. 64:16.
[1045] Q. 3:97.

Then, the power of actions does not endure and the thing completed through it [i.e., a task] does not [yet] exist, whereas liability is necessary. Likewise, almsgiving is obligatory through goods and states, even if one has difficulty in [physically] giving alms due to some excuses that arise. *Strength comes from God alone.*

The tradition has proceeded on this basis, and the tongues are unanimous in seeking help and support from God in order to carry out the rites He has commanded. If [the power of action] existed [i.e., prior to performance of the act], or if the obligation of worship dropped due to the absence of that power, [in the first case] this request of people would have been an unjust request, and [in the second case God] would have commanded to be ungrateful to the power [of means and states] He bestowed.[1046] For the reasons we have mentioned, the obligation is established without [the power of action]. *Strength comes from God alone.* On this basis, the statement of Shuʿayb: "I desire naught save reform so far as I am able",[1047] establishes the position of those who profess the existence of the ability to act [at the time of the action and not before].[1048] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1046] In the first scenario, someone already possessing the full power to realize their actions does not need to ask for God to facilitate it. In the second scenario, someone would be given for instance sound means to act yet are not obligated to give thanks due to lacking the power of action. They are therefore, by default, commanded with ingratitude.

[1047] Q. 11:88.

[1048] This is similar to verses such as Q. 11:20, 18:67, 18:82 and 64:16 mentioned above. The idea is that the uncertainty connected to the power of action is what makes Prophet Shuʿayb uncertain about how much he will be able to achieve reform of his people, rather than his lack of the faculties required.

Then, to affirm the power of action [for the servant] is to accept a meaning that refutes dualism. This is that each of the two [gods] negates what the other affirms or conceals what the other's knowledge does not reach. Therefore, whoever says that the servant can do that which God does not know will happen; can belie Him in relation to the things that He informs; and can destroy what He has willed to endure, is able to render God foolish, ignorant and a breaker of His promise. Yet one who is described thus is not a deity. Through such [argumentation the Mu'tazila] rejected the doctrine of the Dualists. In addition, there is something surprising in this matter [i.e., in the claim that the servant has the power of action], which is that God gives someone the power to abolish His lordship because this person has the power to make Him a liar, ignorant and unable to keep His promise. To give such power to someone is something even the most foolish of the foolish would not do, let alone the wisest of the wise. *Strength comes from God alone.*

According to the teachings of these people [i.e., the Mu'tazila], human beings have a power to break the governance of the world, and the messengers have a power to avoid showing a proof of God on the earth and for each of them to refrain from the way the world is governed. This builds the existence of the states of [the world] on human hands, as well as the creation of the heavens and earth. God Most High has no power to avoid creating these actions and states in their hands, whereas the human beings have the power to avoid performing any of these [actions]. In that case, the human beings have acted with highest benevolence to Him and have given the loftiest blessings! Indeed, though [people] have the power to hinder His determination and impede His governance, they have done what upholds His governance, and fulfills His ownership and sovereignty as He planned and willed! This is the scariest thing to say. *God alone leads to success.*

Then, the [physical] existence of [this] doctrine [i.e., that the power of action belongs to God not the human being] is evident in creatures. [For example, people say such things as], "I cannot do it because I am busy with this", or "I am not able to carry this on my back." It is impossible that God would cause people's tongues to say things that are in fact false, without any resistance from them, even though they know that they have the ability of means and states. Thus, it is established that people have a power beyond [their means and states] that they mention while making excuses in relation to actions [that they are not able to do], not in the sentences that turn one's imagination towards the states. *God alone leads to success.*

[6.6. Is the Power of Action Prior to or Together with the Action?]

The reasoning in this matter is that the power [of action], since it is not one of the parts of the body, is an accident in reality. As for the accidents, they do not endure because the endurance of that which may disappear is not possible except with an [accident of] endurance that is other than it. Since the accident does not possess essential substantiveness, it cannot be characterized by others. Also, it is impossible for a thing to endure due to endurance in other than it. So, the endurance of [the power of action] is false. Then, it is corrupt to think that acts exist through preceding causes that are not at the time of the action. Hence, the power of action is like [the accident of endurance]. Therefore, it must be accepted that the power of action is together with the action.[1049] *Strength comes from God alone.* One should add: power belongs to the acts, and the occurrence of weakness may occur after [the agent] has been characterized with power. Were the power to belong to an action subsequent to it, [the power] would be powerless for [the action] that comes from it. That would be contradictory and false.[1050] *Strength comes from God alone.*

Let us also mention this: if the power [of action] depended [solely] on [the power of] states, and if it originated from it, one would be independent of God in all his actions before the existence of the actions [thanks to the power of these states]. Yet God, exalted is His praise, has made all creatures dependent on Him, whereas He is the Independent, the Praiseworthy.[1051] It is impossible for the servants to be independent of Him with greater right than that which mandates neediness. The principle is that since [actions] do not endure, the need for the [accident of] endurance is removed, and the action does not exist [at the time of possessing the power of states]. So, the action would be independent of God before its existence. And that is abhorrent from the perspective of tradition. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1049] As discussed earlier in the text, al-Māturīdī divides his worldly ontology into "dispositional accidents", including colors, natures and so on, "relational accidents", which describe their momentary states, and "vital accidents" that distinguish animate from inanimate beings. Bodies are an aggregate of dispositional accidents containing parts and accepting characterization by relational and vital accidents. The latter two classes of accident, unlike the body composite, cannot be characterized by accidents of endurance, and so must be momentary. This line of argument also leads to the conclusion that the accident of power must exist only in the same moment as its associated action.

[1050] Al-Māturīdī points out that a person may have power one moment and be weak the next. But then it cannot be the case that a person exercises the power to perform an action and it occurs subsequently, because then that power would be having its effect on the action at the same time that the person is weak.

In addition, the power [of action] is not known in its essence, nor does it have a definition that reveals its reality. All we can say about it is that God has made the reality of its existence [known] from the action.[1052] An action does not exist before [the power], but through it. Thus, it is established that He bears witness that the power does not exist before [the action], but at the time of its being. *God alone leads to success.*

Also, just as a weak entity cannot act, it is out of the question for a strong entity not to act. Thus, just as it is impossible that an entity is both weak and active, it is impossible to judge that it is powerful and inactive. So, these two options [that is, the combination of weakness and action, and that of power and inaction] share in being excluded from existence [i.e., in being impossible]. In addition, the improbability of [these combinations] is believed by means of the intellect due to the opposition of [their] meaning to reality. In this, death and similar situations are not taken into account because death is powerlessness in totality, while life is not power in totality. For, though it is possible that life exists without an act, it is impossible for an agent with power to exist for two moments without an action. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1051] Referring to Q. 35:15.

[1052] MS. 137r and K, 261 have "intellect" (*ʿaql*) instead of "action" (*fiʿl*) here, which is plausible, but makes less theological sense. Topaloğlu and Aruçi comment on the looseness of the scribe's treatment of the two similarly written words throughout the manuscript, see TA, 347, n. 9. Al-Māturīdī seems to be arguing that what can be called the "accident of power", or "power of action" is something that we must posit based on the existence of the action. As a vital accident, it is a description of how the effect of God's existentiating act realizes the body with the power to instantly choose an action rather than its alternative.

Moreover, we observe in the visible world that since causes are such that they cannot exist at given times without their effects, they necessitate the existence of things, whether through choice or compulsion. For example [in terms of compulsion]: "coming out" with "extraction"; "disappearance" with "removal"; "pain" with "striking"; "pleasure" with "giving pleasure"; and "tiredness" and "hardship" with "action". Then, in terms of choice, examples are as follows: "the friendship of God" with "belief"; and "His enmity" with "disbelief".[1053] The same is true for [God's] acceptance, rejection, and so on, as well as [His] naming and judging things. Even though God Most High is described by the action in eternity, due to the connection of His mention with other than Him, the time applying to that other [i.e., the creation] is mentioned for Him. For instance, it is said: "[God] eternally knows [so-and-so's] as a being at the time of his being, and as an existent at the time of his existence."[1054] *Strength comes from God alone.*

Another argumentation is as follows: from among the claims of the Mu'tazila is that the hindered thing is not due to powerlessness, so [the servant] performs the action unrestrictedly. Hence, they do not deny [the action] due to powerlessness and hindrance, and [for them] powerlessness and the impossibility of the action with it are the same. In addition, the existence of the action in a state is definitely impossible when there is a hindrance, but due to the preceding power, the existence of the action is possible when there is no power. *Strength comes from God alone.*

The principle in this matter is that if the power [of action] does not apply to an action while it exists, then it applies to an action when it does not exist. So, power becomes a cause for an action when it does not exist in reality, such that it is a belief in the existence of the action without power. In this case, the action is evidence that the agent is not powerful. However, [the Mu'tazila] have sought to use [the analogy of human power] as evidence for God being powerful. Thus, the basis of making inference from the visible world is destroyed because the reality about this issue is that the agent is powerless at the time of the act. Hence, the action becomes evidence for the negation of power, which abolishes monotheism.[1055] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1053] In this example, one chooses to acquire the friendship of God (as manifested through the created state of being the friend of God) by believing, and one chooses to acquire the enmity of God by disbelieving. In both cases, the necessity reflects the providential order that God has created based on His wisdom.

[1054] Al-Māturīdī strictly maintains the language of temporality as applying to the created being and not to God and His actions. The point he is making in this context is that God's creative action is not in any sense temporally simultaneous with the human being's power and action.

Since power does not benefit when it exists, it is the same whether it existed or did not exist during the existence [of the action]. This necessitates accepting that the action might exist without any power or without the power being simultaneous with it. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[6.8. A Critique of al-Kaʿbī's Doctrine on Power and Burdening Beyond Capacity]

1) Then, let us mention al-Kaʿbī's views along with the explanations that show the delusion in his judgments. He claims that burdening beyond capacity is self-evidently known to be rationally abhorrent. [We say that] this is only in the intellect that is unaware of capacity other than outward power, which is health. As for other than that, it is not as he says. On the contrary, God has indeed burdened [in this way].[1056] Then,[1057] Moses' companion [al-Khaḍir] is favorably approved while knowing that [Moses] would lack capacity [to have patience with him].[1058] Likewise, it is the same [i.e., permissible] to burden in that which one is not self-evidently aware.[1059] Then, it is said to al-Kaʿbī: It is rationally abhorrent to burden beyond one's capacity due to the time of the action. As for the abhorrence you claim, it is only in the intellects of those who absurdly consider the existence of

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[1055] The Muʿtazila allow power to characterize the agent prior to the act. For al-Māturīdī, this means that they allow the human agent to be powerless at the time of action. But this means that they cannot draw an analogy from the human agent as powerful in the visible world to God as powerful in the unseen world.

[1056] God has tasked human beings with actions that, though they possess the outward means to perform, they lack the power to realize. This is not rationally abhorrent.

[1057] Reading *thumma* with MS. 139r.

[1058] Reading *qubila* with MS. 139r. Al-Khaḍir, who was given insight into realities usually veiled from the human being, knew that Moses would lack the power to be patient. For evidence that "Moses' companion" refers to al-Khaḍir and not Pharaoh, see 6.5, 2, ii. Also, see Harvey, *Transcendent God, Rational World*, 173.

[1059] Just as it was permissible for Moses to be burdened with a patience that he did not have the power to fulfill, it is permissible for the human being to be burdened in terms of the power of action or accident of power.

the action without power, which is the time of the action. So, in application his doctrine becomes rationally abhorrent if he is right about his claim. *Strength comes from God alone.*

The principle is that it is rationally false to burden someone whose capacity has been prevented. As for someone who wastes power, he is most worthy of being so burdened. If such a person is not burdened, then only the obedient can be held responsible. But that [i.e., holding responsible only those who will obey] is not a condition of the test. *Strength comes from God alone.*

In our opinion, power exists in the sound and healthy person because power occurs naturally according to the servant's desire, choice and inclination to it. Therefore, when it [i.e., a given choice] does not occur, neither does [the chosen act][1060] due to [the servant's] neglect. This is because one prefers its replacement, choosing the action that opposes it. *Strength comes from God alone.* For us and for them [i.e., the Muʿtazila], the matter of understanding and knowledge are also evaluated in this way. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] expressed the following thought, indicating his own folly: if it was possible to draw a distinction between [the action of God] and what comes from other than Him, then it would be possible for the lie that arises from another to be true when it arises from Him. I do not know what led him to such delusion. We have already shown that [al-Kaʿbī] departed from [wisdom] and displayed obstinacy in his claims. This is because he has to choose one of two things: either he makes everything he knows from human beings in the visible world as wisdom or folly valid for the unseen as well, or he will look at the determinant cause that makes [something wisdom or folly] in reality and apply it to the unseen. If he adopts the first attitude, it will force his hand in the issues of creating that which does not benefit oneself, of creating something from nothing, and punishing without reprieve.[1061] Then, the same is said about his allowance for the doctrine

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[1060] Reading *lam yuḥdath* with K, 266.

[1061] These refer to the issue of the creation not benefiting God, creation *ex nihilo*, and the "threat" (*al-waʿīd*) of eternal punishment for unrepentant sinners, all positions to which al-Kaʿbī is committed. They all rely on inferences from the visible world and not self-evident knowledge.

concerning [God] lying. Any answer that he gives binds himself in what he says. If he investigates the determinant cause [of wisdom and folly and therefore adopts the second option], he invalidates his own doctrine concerning what is self-evidently known to reason, [such as claiming:] "This is possible for God and that is impossible" – and this is the kind of fantasy that has no basis, so no![1062] When can one perceive the realities of things by self-evident reason? Intellects have been made to differentiate between different things by the determinant causes that require difference, and to unite between things that are joined due to the determinant causes that require joining. This [differentiating and uniting] is the right of the thinking and reflection that lead to these [meanings]. Then, no one is considered knowledgeable about something who does not possess knowledge of it, nor powerful without having power over it. On the contrary, everything known to be bereft of power and knowledge is characterized by ignorance and powerlessness. When it is possible to characterize it by power and knowledge, it is knowledgeable and powerful. *Strength comes from God alone.*

If he [when determining wisdom and folly] resorts to considering the determinant causes that are the causes of the realities of things, that is uncontested, and therefore [the addition] "with self-evident reason" has no meaning: this [task] is the right of the nature [i.e., the senses] and its exertion.[1063] Then, [al-Kaʿbī] denies that there are ugly, evil and corrupt things among God's creatures in reality, whereas the existence of innumerable [creatures] with these qualities is known to reason. On the contrary, God, exalted is His praise, has set [some things] as examples of what is bad from [human] deeds by rendering them [ugly, evil and corrupt] to make the intelligent person reflect upon them and understand what is threatened for them [in the Hereafter]. What does one who denies such a thing [i.e., the existence of evil created according to a certain wisdom among beings] have to do with claims about the principle of reason? Then, the leaders of [the Muʿtazila] have always criticized the Dualists, saying that good and evil, and the pure and impure, could emerge from a single being, and by doing so, they aimed to fend off dualism. But then they said that it was impossible for one of these two [i.e., the evil and impure] to emerge from of God. Whoever accepts another aspect [i.e., a creator of evil] in the beings of the world, he requires what the Dualists say. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1062] Either al-Kaʿbī must derive the principles of divine wisdom univocally from the world, which would conflict with his own doctrines, or he must investigate determinant causes (as al-Māturīdī himself holds). In the latter case, he must abandon his claim to know what is wisdom or folly for God by immediate rational knowledge. In any case, this latter position is pure delusion according to al-Māturīdī.

[1063] Reading MS. 140r as *nafād*.

3) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] dismissed the objection made to him [of God's] creation of something that He would not benefit from, [saying] that this does not imply the burdening of a crippled person. This explains that the claim that [al-Kaʿbī] puts forward with the "self-evidence of reason" is a lie and that the analogy he suggests is based only on what his opponent accepts, and nothing else.[1064] Hence, [al-Kaʿbī] applied, through that which his opponent objected (which he claimed was from self-evident reason) an affirmation of [something] true [i.e., the inapplicability of burdening beyond capacity for the crippled person] to support a lie in the visible world [i.e., the complete rejection of burdening beyond one's capacity]. Then, [al-Kaʿbī] responded that to refrain from benefit through action is not praiseworthy.[1065] Therefore, he has established that what is bad from [the actions of the servant] is not intrinsically bad.[1066] Likewise, [al-Kaʿbī's] opponent [i.e., al-Māturīdī] has also adopted that it is impossible [for God] to burden [the servant] with performing [certain things] that are within his capability, which establishes that [those things] are not bad on account of themselves, such as obscenity and disbelief.[1067] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1064] Al-Kaʿbī holds burdening beyond one's capacity to be self-evidently bad. That is, we know by self-evidence, and not inference from the visible world that it would be bad for God to do so. The response of his opponenet [i.e., al-Māturīdī] is that the principle that God does not benefit Himself through creation cannot be established through self-evidence. Al-Kaʿbī is said to ignore this objection and argue that nonetheless, there is no implication from this that the crippled person is burdened beyond their capacity. Al-Māturīdī rejects the idea that this has any relation to self-evident knowledge. In fact, what it shows is that al-Kaʿbī opportunistically argues based on the premises that his opponent accepts (in this case that it would be foolish to burden someone who lacks outward capacity), rather than on his own stated principles.

[1065] So, God does not refrain from benefit.

[1066] As God has made the world for benefit, the existence of something bad is not intrinsically evil but has to serve another beneficial purpose.

[1067] Al-Māturīdī does not state that everything is for the servant's benefit, but that it would not be wise for God to burden the servant with disbelief, though he remains fully capable of performing it.

[We respond that words of obscenity and disbelief] are foremost [to justify as not intrinsically evil], since they arise from small children without leading to their characterization with obscenity and disbelief. An act that is not useful to oneself and is characterized by wisdom does not arise from small children. As for the issue of refraining from benefit [mentioned by al-Kaʿbī], it is wisdom in that aspect, but not in terms of [causing] harm. That is to be harmful in outcome, to be ungrateful to the blessing, or to oppose the Lord in deed. As this is [al-Kaʿbī's] defense, the questions corner him, and he failed to corner his opponent with the counter objection of the crippled person, by which refuted his own position. So, let it be known how far [al-Kaʿbī] is from the truth both in matters that he agrees with and ones he differs from his opponent. Then, the answer of al-Kaʿbī's opponent is easy, and we have explained it above. *God knows best.*

4) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] said: That [i.e., it being bad to create a thing that will not benefit oneself] is said in relation to one who acts out of need. It is said: [Creating a thing that will not benefit oneself] is also bad when it arises from one who cannot support another when [the former] is asked for support and when he is implored.

Then, [al-Kaʿbī] objects to himself, speaking about someone who gives his servant what he knows the servant would use to disobey him, answering as follows: This [behavior] may sometimes be wise. For example, someone who knows from the report of the Messenger that [another] will not be a believer, it is permissible to feed him. These and similar examples show upon reflection that [al-Kaʿbī] is ignorant about that by which he objects to himself. This is because for the one whom he mentions it is not permissible that he feeds him so that [the other] believes through it after his knowledge that he will not do it [i.e., believe]. He may only feed him for other benefits than this. The Muʿtazila claim that [the servant] was given power in order that he believe with it, though He knew that he would disbelieve with it. So, that is not something of his capability [i.e., to believe]. In addition, the debate is about the one who shall disobey him. Therefore, no one counts himself among the wise people when he knows that his servant will disobey him with that which he gave him and will not earn his pleasure. Rather, he will be hostile to him and insult him. *Strength comes from God alone.* However, the only reason why this [i.e., the master giving his servant that through which the latter will disobey] is bad in the visible world is that it harms and visits pain upon [the master], whereas such a thing is impossible with regard to the unseen. *God alone leads to success.*

Then, al-Kaʿbī said: "One present [in the visible world] has no right to test" etc. How can he [utter this statement] after his determination of the action of the unseen by the visible world by accepting what he found in the latter [as applying to what he finds in the former]. For in this case, he will be countered with everything he rejects by claiming it exits from wisdom. This is the case for the action of [the master] in the [master-servant example]. As for God, exalted is He, then He is lofty above the reality of [His wisdom] being comprehended by the intellect of one like [al-Kaʿbī]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

5) We have set forth an interpretation of His statement: "God tasks not a soul beyond its scope"[1068] and explained the ugliness of [al-Kaʿbī's] words about dropping the burden at the time of the action and nullifying the power to act upon it, so [the servant] is held responsible despite having no capacity. The following is said to [al-Kaʿbī]: How, if it was in the knowledge of God, did he not act; or is it in His knowledge that He intended the action to occur in the next moment? You have the statement: Anyone who wants to act at the next moment will inevitably perform the action so long as he is not prevented from committing it. [We ask:] Will the servant be prevented, or will he perform the opposite of the action? If [al-Kaʿbī] says: "He will perform the opposite of the action", then he invalidates his own statement that the will precedes the action, binding himself with the sentence: "[The action] is together with the command and power." Thus, the words of [the Muʿtazila] about the "necessitating will (*al-irāda al-mūjiba*)" are false. If [al-Kaʿbī] chooses the option, "He is prevented", he will force responsibility upon someone who in the knowledge of God cannot act with a power that is prevented from acting, which results in burdening the incapable and restricted. If [al-Kaʿbī] says that his responsibility is lifted, then he abolishes the fact that one of the people – who in God's knowledge disobeys Him – is put to the test and subject to commands and prohibitions. This is the ultimate limit that a doctrine may reach in repugnance.

[1068] Q. 2:286.

Similar is the case with the will. That is, since God has prevented [the servant] from performing an action that He knows he will not do, He must prevent him from willing. This means preventing what is obedience and goodness in His sight. Then, the following is said to [al-Ka'bī]: It is narrated about someone that he drew his sword against the Messenger of God, but God prevented him by constricting his hand.[1069] Now, is it more suitable and better for this person in terms of religion that he should be prevented or allowed? If [al-Ka'bī] says, "To be allowed", he accepts that God has done the most unfavorable thing for His servants in terms of religion. If he says, "To be prevented", he admits that sometimes it is more suitable to prevent [actions], and that the most beneficial thing has not been done to the unhindered disobedient people. *Strength comes from God alone.*

6) As for [al-Ka'bī's] citing as evidence His statement, "If we had been able, we would surely have set out with you",[1070] we have already presented the case that is against him in this matter as well as the evidence showing that his opponents are stronger in adherence to and knowledge of [the verse]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, [al-Ka'bī] voices the following counter objection: [For the hypocrite who fails to set out for jihad], only poverty is a legitimate excuse, and this meaning [i.e., poverty] is present in the loss of power.

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: One may answer him in three ways:

i) If [the hypocrite who failed to set out for jihad] had not attained sufficient property [e.g., provisions and a mount], it would not be obligatory upon him [because this refers to the power that existed before the jihad, that is, the means and states belonging to the servant]. But what he lacked was the power of the action to attain [the use of his property due to his own choice to remain], so it did not eliminate the obligation [of going on jihad].[1071] So, like this [one can understand] the existence of the two matters and their absence for the situation.[1072]

[1069] See Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 2:61; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-Maghāzī*, 31; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, 2:557.

[1070] Q. 9:42.

[1071] See the discussion in 6.5.

[1072] The possible combinations are as follows: 1) One who possesses both means and power to set out for jihad (i.e., including the believer who does so); 2) One who

ii) The process to which we are accustomed with regard to action is that powers occur naturally according to what the servant chooses and the action that he intends. This occurs inevitably unless he wastes [the power] by shifting his choice to something other than for which it can be used, so the wasting leads to the disappearance of this power. Or [the servant] is prevented [from using this power]. Therefore, the two [i.e., the servant's abandoning the power and his being prevented from using it] are different.

iii) In the absence of power, the action may exist, but in the absence of the cause for which the power arises, the action cannot exist. It has therefore been established that the two aspects [i.e., the absence of power and the absence of the cause of power] are not alike.[1073] *God alone leads to success.*

Then, [al-Ka'bī] made a counter objection, saying that it is possible [for the hypocrites] to be commanded to set out for jihad because they were given goods at the time of [the command to set out], arguing that if someone [i.e., al-Māturīdī] considers this possible, he will invalidate his own opinion, and if he does not, he will abandon it.[1074]

This may be answered [based on the explanations above] in three ways:

i) making a distinction between the goods that lead to jihad and those that do not.

ii) the usual way in which power is generated.

iii) denying the act in the moment due to the absence of means, but not denying it in the moment due to the absence of power. Again, with one of these two aspects [i.e., with the first one] the [obligation] is lifted, while

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possesses means but lacks power (i.e., the hypocrite who is not excused); 3) One who lacks means yet has power (i.e., an impossible situation); 4) One who lacks both means and power (i.e., someone who is legitimately excused).

[1073] An action may exist without the presence of the accident of power, but it cannot exist without the prior means that provides the proper locus for the accident to be generated. For example, one may breathe voluntarily (with an accident of power) or involuntarily (without). But one cannot breathe without lungs.

[1074] The contention is that a person is commanded to set out for jihad at the moment that he is given sufficient means. If this is possible, it is said to invalidate al-Māturīdī's position because that immediately given state would automatically generate the power to set out. If it is impossible, then it might seem that the action could not be at the moment of the command.

with the second it is not. If it had been known through the report of the Truthful One [i.e., the Prophet Muḥammad] that someone had continually received goods, the answer about these two [types of power] would not have been different.[1075] *Strength comes from God alone.*

Moreover, if the objection above is accepted, it entails an impossibility, which is the impossibility of spending property while [retaining] possession of it. [This is] similar to God creating the body with motion, but it being neither involuntary nor voluntary. An involuntary motion may be together with incapacity, and similarly a voluntary [motion] with power. If the power were to be such that the action would not unite with it, then it would be false that the action occurred because of it. On the contrary, the action would take place due to its absence.[1076] *Strength comes from God alone.* Do you not see that, states and means, along with their establishment of an action [are realized] in their continuance with the description of their precedence, and with the state to sustain power.[1077] So, the same is true in describing the precedence [of the hypocrites' property].[1078] *God knows best.*

In this matter, apart from the evidence we have already mentioned, there is the following: if the preceding incapacity would have prevented the action at the moment of power, then the preceding power would have necessitated the action at the moment of powerlessness. The impossibility of this implies that the first must also be impossible. If the action had taken place due to the absence of power, the action would have continued when this absence continued because the causes of things are that through which they exist. Accordingly, as long as the causes continue to exist, they require that the things for which they are the cause continue to exist. This indicates that the existence [of the thing] is simultaneous with [the causes].

[1075] That is, even if someone always had access to the means to travel for jihad, and that was known by a certain prophetic report, it would not alter the fact that they may not have the power to set out, due to their own choice not to go.

[1076] In other words, there is no meaning to power for an involuntary action, since power requires the exercise of voluntary choice.

[1077] The power "sustained" is that of states and means, associated with bodies, not the momentary accident of power.

[1078] The argument here is that the Muʿtazilī objection relies on a mischaracterization of the ontological picture of the act. Al-Kaʿbī imagines that if the hypocrites could be given the property needed to set out for jihad at the exact moment that they were commanded, then there would not be need for a divinely created accident of power to realize the act in question. Al-Māturīdī's response is that this is incoherent. The means to set off for jihad are pre-conditions that are fundamentally different to the actual power to realize the action of setting off, which they make possible. He gives the example of voluntary and involuntary motions. Voluntary motions can only be made in connection with an accident of power. Similarly, the action of setting off for jihad requires the underlying means as well as the appropriate power of action in each moment.

7) Then, [al-Ka'bī] claimed that it is impossible for power to be simultaneous with the action, because God sees [the action] as existing, yet it is impossible for power to be together with the existing action.

[Al-Ka'bī] is asked: By the term "existing", do you mean [the servant's] completion of [the action] or his [occupation] with it? If he says, "The completion of [the action]," anyone who thinks realizes that he lies, and he invalidates his following statement: "It is possible that [the action] may not exist in the alternative state, that is, in the state of incapacity. It is not necessary to believe it impossible that incapacity is combined with the non-existent [action], even though God sees the action as non-existent, because non-existence is not nullified. Rather, [the servant] is occupied with [inaction]."[1079]

Then, [al-Ka'bī] is asked: Does God show friendship and enmity [to the servant] at the time of his action, before it, or after it? If [al-Ka'bī] answers, "Before the action", he makes [the action] impossible. If he says, "After the action", he invalidates his statement, "God sees [the action] as existing…", because he would then accept the existence of the act of enmity and friendship [as the cause] while friendship and enmity [as the effect] did not exist. If he says, "In the state of acting", it is said: The cause exists together with the effect, and he did not negate the co-existence of the action with [the cause]. When God sees friendship and enmity as existing, then so is power. Again, in whatever state God sees [the action], He sees the power together with it. Hence, He sees the "throwing" and "extracting" of something as simultaneous with its "being thrown" and "coming out".[1080] Therefore, the due right of "throwing" and "extracting" [i.e., to exist simultaneously with their effects] is not negated because He sees a thing as He sees it. What I am referring to [i.e., power] is also like that. Since it is possible, and not impossible, for God to see the action and all the causes together with it as existing, so the same is true for power. On the contrary, He must see [power with the action] like this, just as He should see it [i.e., the action] along with the causes.

[1079] This quotation of al-Ka'bī appears to deal with the application of his ideas about the thingness of non-existence. The alternative to an action existing is that it does not exist in the state of incapacity. But there is a sense, according to him, in which incapacity is combined with the non-existent action – in inaction – such that God sees its non-existence and the human being is occupied with it. This idea of "occupation" in action or inaction conflicts with his potential response that the existence of the action refers to the servant's completion of it.

[1080] See 6.6.

The summary of it is as follows: the action has a time of non-existence, which is before it, and a time of disappearance, which is after it, and a time of existence, which is its present state. Thus, God sees the action along with its states as has been mentioned, not in any other way [i.e., He sees the action as non-existent when it does not exist, as existent when it exists, and as non-existent when it disappears]. Likewise, [He sees] the times, places, causes and power of the actions as non-existent before the action, as non-existent after it and existing together with it.[1081] *Strength comes from God alone.*

As for [al-Ka'bī's] argument with His statement: "Or [he is] unable himself to dictate, [so let the guardian of his interests dictate] ..."[1082] its explanation has preceded.[1083] In addition, there is a possibility that by ["unable himself to dictate"], the sense of "unable to dictate well" might also be meant here, meaning insufficient power. The evidence for this, as we have explained, is that the power of completion of the action does not exist before [the action] begins, whereas the whole [of the action] is attributed to [this insufficient power in the verse]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

8) Then, al-Ka'bī said: "If [the servant] does not believe until he is able, he is unable until he believes. Thus, he ever remains an unbeliever. This is like one who falls into a well: he cannot get out until the rope comes to him, and the rope cannot come to him until he gets out."[1084] The answer

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[1081] God's "seeing" of these different states of the action do not happen in temporal sequence, since God's action occurs in timeless eternity. Also, al-Māturīdī's language of non-existence should be taken as a prior and subsequent negation of the action's existence, not a substantial non-existence as upheld by the Mu'tazila.

[1082] Q. 2:282.

[1083] This is the first time that al-Māturīdī has discussed this verse in the text, so the meaning is presumably that one should refer to his treatment of other verses using the verb for ability (*istiṭā'a*). See 6.5.

[1084] This takes aim at al-Māturīdī's view that the power is simultaneous with the action, seeking to place it in a vicious circle.

to this objection consists of the things that I mentioned earlier and that happen through the causes that are not before or after them [rather they are simultaneous with them]. Then, [al-Kaʿbī] did not say this about knowledge since it occurs when one is not heedless of [something] nor turned away. The same applies to what I have mentioned.[1085] The principle in the matter that al-Kaʿbī claims is as follows: an impossible situation arises only if each of two things exists depending on the other. As for the coexistence of two things, this is the basis for most religious and worldly affairs. Just from the existence of two things together, it cannot be said that each thing precedes the other. Then, [al-Kaʿbī] objects to himself, relying on the [phenomenon of] "throwing" described earlier. He tries to answer this objection in a way that he would never resort to if he felt even a little embarrassment, and says: "Throwing a thing consists of it coming out from one's hand and nothing else. Ability is different from the action." Anyone who looks at this statement knows its falsehood because [he claims] that the fact that "throwing" is the "coming out" [of a thing] and nothing else is known self-evidently, not by reflection. When it is nothing else, then there is nothing but the "coming out", so no action is ascribed to [the servant], and it becomes possible for there to be a "coming out" without any performance by [the servant] along with it.[1086] *Strength comes from God alone.* Then, [al-Kaʿbī] makes inferences on behalf of his opponent that are something like this [i.e., the preceding point]. I have passed over it here [and preferred my own comments]; perhaps it will be of benefit.

9) Then, on behalf of his opponent, [al-Kaʿbī] cites as evidence that if one asks another to meet a need of his, the latter says "I am unable..." though, in fact, there is nothing that prevents him.[1087] [Al-Kaʿbī] claimed that he did not intend by it the negation of power, but only the negation

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[1085] The idea seems to be that al-Kaʿbī accepts that knowledge of things is instantaneous so long as one is in a receptive state, so why should not the same be the case with action? A similar parallel is invoked in 6.8 (1).

[1086] Al-Māturīdī here argues for the absurdity of al-Kaʿbī claiming that it is self-evident that even common things, such as throwing something, can occur without being actions (even involuntary ones) ascribed to the servant.

[1087] Recall that a recurrent point of debate is between the Muʿtazilī position that if one has the outward means to do an action, then the relevant power is already present. This is opposed to al-Māturīdī's position that there must be an additional divine bestowal of the accident of power.

of enthusiasm. The evidence for this is that the one who made the request turns to him and says: "On the contrary, you are able, but you do not want to help me. As a matter of fact, you had met the needs of so-and-so, hence how can you say that you are unable?"

Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said: Two answers are given to [al-Kaʿbī]:

i) Both [the requester and the responder] have told the truth. This is because lack of enthusiasm eliminates power; the possibility to perform a work happens through [power], and enthusiasm is part of that. Therefore, [the action] comes into existence through power, and this is what the responder means. These two [i.e., the removal of power by the absence of enthusiasm, and the occurrence of action through power] are something known. Therefore, it is impossible to attribute a lie to either of them, whereas, in [al-Kaʿbī's] opinion, one of them may be so attributed.

ii) According to the common understanding, if [the responder] had fulfilled the request, power would have come to him. Do you not see that [al-Kaʿbī] cites as evidence meeting the needs of others. However, it is known that this power departs from one [after meeting the needs]. *God alone leads to success.*

10) [Al-Kaʿbī] claims that the disbeliever was commanded to believe when he was in a state of disbelief. The interpretation of [this] is that prohibition preceded it. So, one is forced to say: "He is able [to believe] with a pre-existing power." He claims that he abandoned the first position [i.e., about the disbeliever refraining from disbelief], that he retreated in favor of the doctrine of Muslims and interpreted it according to the possible [understanding], but in the second [i.e., that actions occur through a pre-existing power] he did not take the same stand.

We say, and God alone leads to success: Every Muslim believes that the disbeliever, while in a state of disbelief, is strong in his [disbelief]. Therefore, let [al-Kaʿbī] say in relation to power what he has said about the command, because the meaning in statement and action is the same. Then, [al-Kaʿbī's] has interpreted the words of Muslims in a way that he knows a Muslim has never thought of. On the contrary, he knows that a Muslim cannot accept it no matter how hard he tries. This is that: "At the present time, no disbeliever is banned from his disbelief, nor is he commanded to believe."[1088] If the disbeliever is not banned [from the state of disbelief] he has adopted at his present time and is not commanded with its opposite [belief], such will be the case in the second, third, and other times *ad infinitum*. This is the abolition of injunction and prohibition in reality because being commanded with a thing [i.e., with belief] and being prohibited from its opposite [disbelief] obtains [only] for the second moment, and the servant cannot fulfill the command and cannot obey the prohibition at the present time because he is not yet at that time. This is the case with all times. Thus, the due right of commands and prohibitions becomes invalid forever and turns into a state other than fulfilling commands and prohibitions. This is far-fetched.[1089]

11) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] mentions his opponent's question in a way that his opponent would never utter and says: "Since you attribute power to yourself, you have resembled God through that power." [Al-Kaʿbī] responds: "No such result follows, because you have been given power by [God], and He [has power] through no other, as is the case with knowledge."

The Shaykh Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said: If you were given power by God, it would not be possible that the power of God should disappear because of your power [contrary to your claim of our position], just as the knowledge of God would not disappear due to your knowledge because you knew by God. Then, this question may be dealt with in two ways:

i) [God's] singularity in [independent] power. You brought this as evidence while refuting the doctrine of the Dualists. So, you are forced [to say the same] in relation to this matter.

ii) This [i.e., the notion that power will depart from God if the servant obtains power] requires [the servant's] independence from God in the action before it occurs. However, it is impossible for God to make one independent of Himself. If you say, "[The servant] needs God to make his power endure," you make an impossible claim, because it is impossible [for power to endure].[1090] If you say, "God originates another [power for the servant]," you make [the servant] independent of God at a time. If that [independence] is possible at a certain time concurrently with his servitude, it will always be possible. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1088] This argument against al-Kaʿbī relies on his posited distinction between the previous moment that the power for the action is spent and the subsequent moment when the action occurs. Assuming that God's command is tied to the moment of power in which it can be obeyed, then al-Kaʿbī is left absurdly affirming that at the present moment the disbeliever is not commanded to believe.

[1089] See the discussion in 6.7 (4) for a more detailed defense of this argument.

The principle is that power is impossible without an action, and similarly incapacity is impossible with one. Then, one may be able to act at one moment but may not be able to act at the second moment. As a matter of fact, it is known that such a situation exists. Thus, if God Most High [had given power before the action] he would have given power for something impossible to exist, which invalidates the principle that power exists for action. In conclusion, the requirement of reason that [power] exists only for action, invalidates the view that [power] exists before it. *Strength comes from God alone.*

12) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] objects to himself with the case of Pharaoh as follows: if [Pharaoh] had been able to believe, he would have been able to invalidate the knowledge of God. This applies to Pharaoh and anyone whom God knows will not believe. [Al-Kaʿbī] answers with the [argument] that this is not necessary, because power is different from belief that is known to not be realized. If such a result arises for us [i.e., the Muʿtazila] regarding power, the same result is binding for you [i.e., the People of Monotheism] regarding the command [i.e., if Pharaoh's ability to perform the opposite of what exists in God's knowledge is a problem, his ability to perform the opposite of His command is also a problem.][1091] Then, [al-Kaʿbī] objected that the power of God to originate the world so that it changes does not make it possible that He should be characterized as having the power to invalidate His own knowledge. The same is true of the former case [i.e., if God cannot invalidate His own knowledge, how can the servant do so?] Then, [al-Kaʿbī] opposed Ḥusayn [al-Najjār] on [the question of] being unrestricted (*itlāq*). That is, [al-Najjār] said that [Pharaoh] was unrestricted [in terms of

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[1090] The full meaning of power is meant, including the momentary accident that is created simultaneously with the action.

[1091] Al-Māturīdī responds to this objection below, showing that the consideration regarding the commands that attach to Pharaoh is different from the question of power.

any obstacle] between himself and belief. [Al-Ka'bī argued:] Are you saying that [al-Najjār's] approach of seeing [Pharaoh] as unrestricted invalidates the knowledge of God? Then, [al-Ka'bī] continued: If there was anything [regarding Pharaoh's belief], God would know it. Therefore, it would not be outside the knowledge of God.

Shaykh Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said:

i) The aspect to be considered is not what [al-Ka'bī] stipulated, but rather according to his doctrine of the most beneficial (*al-aṣlaḥ*) [i.e., the Mu'tazilī doctrine that God must do what is most beneficial for the servant]. As is known, if God had no sovereignty over what He possesses, He would not be able to lead astray [the servant] who strayed or prevent one who prevented himself from obeying His messenger. That is [the case] for even the smallest sin and what is closest to obedience. So, it has been established that the doctrine of the most beneficial is false and doomed to collapse.

ii) [God] informed that [Pharaoh] would not believe in Him. [God] knows this and he is His enemy. It is rationally self-evident that giving His enemy the power to make Him foolish and supporting him to destroy His sovereignty and nullify His lordship leaves the scope of wisdom. In addition, this attitude allows His enemy to remind Him of his favor in the most severe way by saying: "I have bestowed upon You because You have given me the opportunity to destroy Your lordship, for there cannot be an ignorant lord. You have given me the opportunity to eliminate Your wisdom, for there cannot be a lying wise one. You have given me the power to do that [i.e., believe] and You have commanded me [to believe]. You know that had I wanted [to believe] I would have done so. Thus, Your lordship became complete, and Your wisdom remained intact. Therefore, my favor on You is the greatest, and my blessing on You is the most extensive. Then, in return for which of Your blessings will You punish me, and with what wisdom will You command me when [Your wisdom] is complete with me?" *Strength comes from God alone.*

iii) The only way to know the falsity of the dualistic doctrine is the ability of one of the two gods to know what the other is not able to know. However, this [i.e., giving the servant independent power] requires accepting dualism. If this were possible without the corruption of divinity, the doctrine of the monotheists in its refutation of that of the Dualists would be nullified.

13) As for [al-Ka'bī's] statement: "[God] knows what would happen if [Pharaoh] had believed." This is a useless meaning because along with [God's] knowledge of that, does He know that he will disbelieve or not? If [al-Ka'bī] says, "No" [i.e., that God does not know that Pharaoh will disbelieve], it has rendered Him foolish. On the other hand, if he says, "Yes" [i.e., God knows that Pharaoh will disbelieve], one will have the right to question him as follows: "You say that had [Pharaoh] believed, this would not be outside of His knowledge. But how is it that [Pharaoh's belief] would not be outside of His knowledge, while His knowledge was that [Pharaoh would disbelieve], but [Pharaoh believed]? *Strength comes from God alone.*

As for [al-Ka'bī's] statement: "If the servant were unable to act, he would not deserve to be condemned" it is equal to [his] other statements [in being worthless], and the evidence for this is that it is his! On the contrary, the servant deserves the greatest condemnation, because when he turns away from the reason that the power has come to him, he has wasted it. [Al-Ka'bī's] statement: "It [i.e., condemning the incapable servant] is not necessary because power is different from belief" should also be rejected because it [i.e., his teaching based on the distinction between the power and the action of believing] includes nothing to prevent such a result. Rather, the only reason for this consequence is that power is different from belief.[1092] Then, the consideration of the command [as a counterpart of power] is false, because [being subject to the command] is an expression of the servant's lowliness and servitude whereas power is independence, loftiness and elevation. Therefore, this [i.e., power in the sense of independence etc.] is the aspect through which one other than God might invalidate His lordship, and this aspect is absent in the command. When there is no command or prohibition, words such as "believes, disbelieves, able, unable" have no meaning.[1093] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1092] In other words, the fact that belief and power are distinct is what allows the incapable servant to be condemned if they waste their power in disbelief.

[1093] One way to look at this point is to consider the above distinction that al-Māturīdī upholds between the underlying means possessed by the disbeliever, to which the command and prohibition are attached, and the accident of power that is created simultaneously with the action.

Then, the fruit of power is the action, and what is mentioned [i.e., the action] occurs through power, and not through the command. Therefore, it does not become a command with the thing mentioned [i.e., the action].[1094] That is why when the servant is given power, he is entrusted with authority, independence and stewardship, and if these were complete, he would be a lord, a deity. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, we have made a counter-objection with that which is known by means of reason in the aspect that I have mentioned. The divine command does not invalidate what reason requires, though if there had been no command, the conclusion reached by reason would have been uncivilized.[1095] [Al-Kaʿbī] either knows the aspect of wisdom in the divine command, or he does not know it in the way that we do. But he does not need to reject the divine command because he has difficulty in the latter aspect [i.e., in knowing its wisdom]. *Strength comes from God alone.* What I have said is confirmed by the situation in the visible world. That is, every powerful person rises and is exalted through his power, whereas one who is majestic and great is not commanded with anything. So, it is established that [receiving] the command involves lowliness and servitude, and therefore it does not necessitate [i.e., cause] the action. On the other hand, giving power involves elevation and loftiness, so it necessitates [i.e., causes the action]. *God alone leads to success.*

Then, the existence of every expended power necessitates [i.e., causes] what is intended, whereas the due right of the command is not the existence of the action, but its obligation. How many commands have not been fulfilled? So, no action has been necessitated [i.e., caused] by [the command]. As for what [al-Kaʿbī] said in relation to God, it is by His power, the execution of His will and the continuance of His sovereignty. Thus, His lordship has become complete, and He has required majesty and elevation by His essence. It is impossible for the fear in question to exist in Him. On the contrary, fullness of wisdom and loftiness of rank are realized through Him. The necessity of this is imperfection for others. Do you not see that [al-Kaʿbī] has refuted the doctrine of the Dualists by [the principle] that I mentioned? Therefore, it is impossible to accept the following doctrine of the Mu'tazila because he opposes a similar view with respect to God: "[The servant] is able to do what [God] knows he will not do." Therefore, [according to this notion, the servant] may invalidate His lordship. [However, in the context of the Dualism, the Mu'tazila] claimed that if [for one of two deities] there was opposition in other than him, it would necessitate [invalidating its divinity]. The same is the case with [the servant's ability to act contrary to His knowledge].

[1094] In other words, a command is a command even if it is not fulfilled, but a power is not a power if the action does not occur through it (*Translator*).

[1095] The revealed command is needed to perfect the deliverances of reason. See S.1 (2).

14) Another explanation is that [according to al-Ka'bī] it is not necessary that God possesses power and knowledge by His statement: "God has power over such-and-such and knowledge of such-and-such thing" as there is no meaning to it. Those [attributes, such as power and knowledge] are realized in other than Him. Therefore, it is necessary to oppose [our view on divine action].

[We reply:] Again, since God is powerful and knowing in His essence, it is impossible for Him to be characterized by what has been said [i.e., the realization of His power and knowledge in another]. For His lordship is complete, and His sovereignty and divinity are majestic. Sometimes a thing is described in its essence such that the authority of something else is established in it and [the other thing's] power holds sway over it. For example, the accidents that differ amongst themselves, and the bodies [comprised] of them, or the bodies that subsist in themselves and the accidents with them [that display their states].[1096] Then, God has sovereignty and dominion over [bodies and accidents]. If we assume the existence over God of [a power] to nullify His determination, destroy His governance, remove His knowledge, and negate the reality of what He informs, then He will be under the power and sovereignty of another. God is far exalted above this in loftiness and greatness. Also, what is unrestricted returns to the command [and, not power], which we have already explained.

According to the Qadarīs' [i.e., the Mu'tazila's] conception of power, two issues require God to not be powerful in His essence:

[1096] Al-Māturīdī mentions two cases to illustrate his point. In the first one, he mentions bodies that belong to the differing accidents that compose them. This seems to refer to his "dispositional accidents". In the second case, he starts from the bodies considered in their existence in their own right and considers the "relational accidents" that characterize their states.

i) They say: "God, exalted is His praise, has power over the motion and stillness of [His servants]. When He gives them power over such motion and stillness, His power over them is lost." Thus, God in fact is powerful through others. Yet in His essence He is as He is, so if [God] had this power in His essence, it would not have departed from Him when He enabled another to have power over [motion and stillness]. Another argumentation that establishes this is that since He knows everything essentially, His knowledge does not depart from Him when He makes another knowledgeable. The same holds true of power. Moreover, the evidence for the otherness of accidents from bodies is the existence of the latter without the former.[1097] Likewise, the reason for the distinction of power and knowledge in the visible world is that each is other than that which it belongs to. Such is the case with what [the Mu'tazila] say in relation to God, exalted is He.[1098]

Another explanation that makes this point even clearer is as follows: had [God] wanted to make [the servant] move through a compulsory motion and stop him through a [compulsory] stopping, and this power [that did not belong to Himself] was with [the servant], He would not have been able to do so until obtaining that power from [the servant]. In that case, it is established that He is powerful through [the servant's power] that leaves from him and returns to Him. This is the description of bodies and the reality of accidents. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) [According to the Mu'tazila], when God Most High gives His servant the power to destroy a thing, the power that wants to keep it in existence departs from Him and keeping it in existence is His action. So, [God] has been prevented from the action that is in fact His. One who may be hindered by one may be freed by another. The former requires incapacity, the latter requires capacity. Both of these have been made necessary upon Him by another. *God is far exalted above that.*

[1097] This is not to say that bodies can exist without any accidents. Rather, it means that a body can exist without being characterized by certain accidents, for instance a given "color" or "motion", whereas such accidents can never exist without a body to characterize.

[1098] Power and knowledge are accidents that are other than the bodies they characterize in a given moment. For the Mu'tazila in question, including al-Ka'bī, the difference between divine attributes reflects the fact that they are other than God in the sense of being realized within the creation.

15) Then, al-Ka'bī said: Someone might say: "If it is possible for the Powerful to remain inactive for a moment, why is He not able to be thus [i.e., inactive] for many moments? In fact, God Most High has been described as such."

The Jurist Abû Manṣûr (may God have mercy on him) said: [Al-Ka'bī] has erred in the criterion [for his judgment]. Questions may only be asked about [the matter] in two ways [i.e., the objections to his position can be better put as follows]:

i) Power exists only for the action. If it was possible for power to be removed from [the action] for a moment, it would be possible for it to be removed from it for many moments. In fact, you have attributed this quality to God.

ii) If, though the power disappears in the second moment following its existence, the action may be realized through [the non-existent power], then why should this not be possible in the tenth moment, even if there is no [power] at that [moment]? Or, if it is impossible for the action to occur many moments after the disappearance of power, it is not possible that [the action occurs] one moment [after it].

So, [al-Kaʻbī] replied to the first [point] that such is the case with God [i.e., He may exist without performing any act] because [His] actions are not in opposition to Him, and He has power over the thing that has no opposite to Him. The servant cannot have power over the thing that has no opposite. Therefore, it is impossible for the servant to exist without performing an action. The following is said to [al-Kaʻbī]: These words of yours do not constitute an answer to the objection made to you. On the contrary, it has been said to you: What is the reason that makes it impossible for one [i.e., the servant], for whom [the actions] are opposite, to exist without performing a certain action or its opposite for a while, but makes it possible for one for whom the actions are not opposite [i.e., God], to exist for a time without action?

Then, regarding the opposition [of action], it is said: Does [al-Kaʻbī] find it impossible [for the servant to be inactive] at the moment of power or does he find it[1099] necessary [for him to act] in the second time [with the act or its opposite].[1100] What [al-Ka'bī] says in relation to God is also unfounded, because according to him, His action is nothing other than His creatures, which involves opposition, such as the case between death and life, etc.

[1099] Reading *aw lahu* with MS. 146r and K, 278.

Then, [al-Ka'bī] replied [to the second point] that the body was free from motion and stillness at the beginning of their state, so why should they not by this also be free from [motion and stillness] at other times?

Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said: Let us put it the following way, and God alone leads to success: Motion and stillness are two names for [the accident of] endurance. Therefore, it is impossible for these two to exist at the beginning of the body's states because stillness is settling in existence, whereas motion is departure from [that stillness]. Power is there only for action. If it were possible to have power without action for one moment, it would be possible for many moments, because [power exists] for [action]. However, the body does not exist for motion or stillness, which are two meanings that do not require a state. Does [al-Ka'bī] not see that the moments of endurance are not devoid of [motion and stillness]? Then, power does not endure, so it is necessary that [power] is not devoid of [action]. *Strength comes from God alone.* Then, our enquiry is related to action, and we find it possible for the body at the time of its [first] existence to have no action [i.e., no motion and stillness], which is [also] a name for endurance. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[Al-Ka'bī] also said that a sound and healthy person may stay away from action during his [initial] constitution, but he can never stay away from it afterwards.

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: What al-Ka'bī said is an error. On the contrary, [a healthy person] may [stay away from action after his initial constitution].[1101] Then, [al-Ka'bī] has claimed that [his view] is rational, but that is [according to] the reason of someone whose reason departs from what he imagines is rational. Then, [al-Kaʿbī] said something about knowledge that, in my opinion, only a confused person would say. I have passed over it due to its meagre benefit.

[1100] Recall that according to al-Ka'bī's principles, the expenditure of power is in the first moment with the action itself emerging in the second. The point here is that in explaining his position, al-Ka'bī has to say that either the agent must be using power for an action or its opposite in the first moment, hence inactivity is impossible, or that in the second moment he acts according to the effect of the power in the act or its opposite.

[1101] Action in the current context is only that which intentionally comes from the exercise of power. According to al-Māturīdī, there are certainly many moments in which a person is not acting in this way.

16) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] makes the following objection to himself: If one were able to either believe or disbelieve, why did he do one rather than the other? He claims that this is impossible because if one were to only do one of the two, he would be compelled.[1102] However, it has been established that there is a free choice. Then, [al-Kaʿbī] raised a similar [objection] as regards God.

Let us say the following: [al-Kaʿbī] has digressed from answering the question because it is about how one chooses something over its opposite. The condition of free choice is not that one does what one wishes, but that one chooses the most appropriate thing to do.[1103] If he does something that he does not know why he is doing it, then it is established that another has governance over his action, such that his action occurs in accordance with it. *God alone leads to success.*

[Al-Kaʿbī's] objection with respect to God, exalted is He, is impossible according to two views:

i) According to our doctrine, God is the creator in His essence. Therefore, to say, ["Why does God create?"] is like saying, "Why does God act with power and knowledge?" In response to [al-Kaʿbī] statement, "That [i.e., His creating] is the most beneficial in terms of religion", [we reply:] Such a description of His act [of creating] cannot be asked.[1104] *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) We praise God, for He has exempted us from such a question. However, I would like to cite a part of [that question] on [a matter] which one cannot countenance as a question due to its weakness. This is so that [the Muʿtazila] are made to know [al-Kaʿbī's] worth on the acceptable matters. *God alone leads to success.*

[1102] The contention seems to be that even if one has the power to do either of two actions, the attachment of power to that action seems to occur necessarily, which then looks like compulsion.

[1103] That is, free choice is not mere arbitrary selection between options but based on knowledge about the outcomes.

[1104] See 3.1.

Then, [al-Kaʿbī] voiced the following claim [from an opponent]: If a single power is suitable for both belief and its opposite, why should it be inappropriate to hold that [God] enables both [belief and its opposite?] He rejected that with the command and prohibition.[1105] Again, [al-Kaʿbī] made a counter objection with the example of the sword and money. Although it is possible to use a sword to kill the friend of God and to spend money to buy wine, it is impossible to believe that [God gave the sword and money] for [these purposes].

We say: The completion of the question is that God knows where He will act. In the visible world the like of this is described as being enabled,[1106] but God cannot be described as such. The same is the case with creating [i.e., God is not enabled by another in what He has created]. In addition, there is what has already been mentioned [i.e., God creates both belief and disbelief]. But the servant has asked and chosen [the action], so it is from [God], not from [the power]. No term is assigned here except "gift" [to express Him enabling the servant to perform whatever he wills], because it is a kind of grace. *Strength comes from God alone.* [Al-Kaʿbī's] counterargument [through the example of the sword and money] is unfounded, since there is a possibility that the servant may not use these two in either of the aforementioned ways [i.e., to kill the friend of God and to buy wine]. Therefore, [the objection in question] cannot be rejected in this respect. However, power can only be used for either one [i.e., for belief or disbelief], and it is impossible for one of them not to exist because of [power], and the existence of [power] is known by it. The objection [raised above] can only be rejected in this way.

17) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] said: If you can say: The disobedient person acts [and sins] through the power from God, why do you not say, "Disobedience is from God"?

[1105] That is, according to al-Kaʿbī, God cannot create human actions without being responsible for transgressing the prohibition.

[1106] Reading MS. 147r as *wa-lā yūḍaʿ fī dhālika ḥarf illā ʿaṭāʾ*, rather than *wa-lā yūḍaʿ fī dhālika ḥarf al-iʿṭāʾ*. Use of the term *ʿaṭāʾ* to specifically express the concept of God's enabling grace is attested in al-Māturīdī's milieu. Al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī writes of belief, guidance, and so on as God's gift (*ʿaṭāʾ*). See Jarrar (ed.), *A Critical Edition of* Kitāb al-Sawād al-Aʿẓam *by al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī*, 112.

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: [Al-Ka'bī] has erred in two respects:

i) His opponents [i.e., the People of Monotheism, including al-Māturīdī himself] do not say about disobedience that it is from God.

ii) It is not said, "The action of the servant is through God's power", but it is said, "through the power he asks from God". Then, [al-Ka'bī] gave the following answer to this question, which is the same as he gave in the first issue [in criticizing his opponents by saying on their view]: "God gave the servant the power to obey and sin." We have already explained how to approach the first issue and [al-Ka'bī's] mistake in his approach to this question.

18) Then, [al-Ka'bī] made an objection to himself: If power had been created for good, how could the servant have changed this power [i.e., to use it for evil]? Thus, [al-Ka'bī] claims that [power] is not like that which warms and cools [i.e., a nature that has a determinant effect], but rather something like the sword and money [i.e., something that is directed by a human agent for an intentional outcome of good or evil].

Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said: It is said to [al-Ka'bī]: Since power does not allow both actions to occur together or both actions to be left together, what you have objected to with [the sword and money] is possible [for both], establishing that the power has been created for a single act, and not for two. Then, it is impossible for a thing created in one single aspect to be turned from that aspect, for example that which you mentioned as heating and cooling. Why is that not an indication that [power] was created for [either] one of the two, or that [action] is what happens through that power? The common custom amongst people of asking [God] for the power to do good clarifies this point for you. This specification [of good] would have no meaning if it were not possible for [that power] to cause evil. *Strength comes from God alone.*

19) Then, [al-Ka'bī] objected to himself on the basis of [the servant's] independence [from God]. So, he responded: God forbid! For it is God who makes one independent. Again, [al-Ka'bī] objected through the example of the sword and money.

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: [Al-Kaʿbī] diverged from the truth in this matter because it is not possible for [human] power to endure, and through [power] God necessitated neediness. Since [the endurance of power] is impossible, the objection against him on account of independence [from God] is entailed. *Strength comes from God alone.* As for the basis on which [al-Kaʿbī] responds, existence [of the power in the first moment] does not make the action endure. Rather, its endurance needs an agent and that does not lie in power. That is why the conclusion from which you seek refuge [i.e., the existence of power at the time of the action] will haunt you. *Strength comes from God alone.*

6.7. Enquiry: [Is It Possible that Power May Be Used for Both Obedience and Disobedience, and Burdening Beyond Capacity]

1) The Jurist Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said: Then, the adherents of this doctrine [i.e., the existence of an accident of power] disagreed as to whether the power of obedience may also be used for disobedience or not.

i) One group said that power is suitable for both [obedience and disobedience]. This is the view of Abū Ḥanīfa[1107] and a group. All of the Muʿtazila have adopted this doctrine after reflection, and it realizes against them the position of burdening beyond capacity.[1108] [The doctrine that power can be used for both obedience and sin] is the cause for the doctrine that power precedes [the action].[1109] *God alone leads to success.*

The principle of this is that since each of the causes of action is suitable both for a certain thing and its opposite, the same holds true of power. In addition, if the power is not suitable for two different works, the power to do the opposite of the work performed through that power disappears. One is sometimes ordered to do something and sometimes prohibited from it in its time. So, it must be accepted that there is the power to perform both a thing and its opposite. Thus, commands and prohibitions occur depending on capacity and power. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1107] This is the first time that the eponymous jurist and theologian Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) is named within *The Book of Monotheism*. It is appropriately within the sections dealing with "older" theological questions, which reflect the debates prevalent in his era. For discussion of how subsequent *kalām* ideas became associated with his written legacy, see Harvey, "Mistaken Identity".

[1108] That is, it leads the Muʿtazila by implication to hold, contrary to their claim, that God obligates someone with what they cannot do (as explained by al-Māturīdī below).

[1109] In this case, it is because the Muʿtazila think that only with the accident preceding the action is the human being able to disobey without that act of disobedience being applied to God.

Next, the principle is that everything that is suitable for something but not suitable for its opposite occurs by nature not by choice. Were power not suitable for them both it would be something that operates by nature, not by choice. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) A group of [people] have said that the power of obedience is different from the power of disobedience, and al-Ḥusayn [al-Najjār] and others are of this opinion. According to them, the acceptable view is as follows: the power of obedience is divine facilitation and divine protection, the power of disobedience is being forsaken and leaving [good deeds] when there is a choice. The evidence of this is the existence of the supplication for divine aid and protection without there being along with them straying, and [supplication for] facilitation encompassing success.[1110] Likewise, saying openly [in prayer], "O God, give me power and help me in Your obedience", and taking refuge in God from being forsaken or left to stray [i.e., this use of language is a proof of the difference between the power of obedience and the power of disobedience]. Thus, the following has been established: if one could perform the same action through one of these [two powers] as he can perform through the other, that which is asked through supplication is not more worthy than the thing from which refuge is sought. Again, if straying had occurred due to divine protection, the heart would not have been in peace during the existence of it. So, it is established that the power of obedience and the power of disobedience are two different powers. Again, just as we ask for help and support, we ask for divine protection and facilitation, so it has become clear that these two [pairs] are actually the same. [As another proof,] no one says that the disbeliever has been facilitated in belief and protected from disbelief, but no one restricts that for the believer. Therefore, it becomes clear that the meaning of this aid is in belief and the other is in forsaking. Also, since the power does not last for two moments so as to be suitable for two actions, and since there is no way to unite two opposite actions in one moment, it is established that this power belongs to one action, and not two. [The power] that can be utilized for two actions is lasting.[1111] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1110] The evidence is in the specification of the divine assistance and protection, which would seem to preclude that the same power could be used for straying.

2) [Al-Māturīdī comments]: if there is power, there is free choice.[1112] This is not like the way fire burns and snow cools,[1113] which take place through compulsion by that which has a nature. [Rather,] it is like [God's] friendship for belief and His enmity for disbelief: the cause of [protection and enmity] differs depending on the differing [between belief and disbelief]. The same holds true of the power that relates to two different works.[1114] *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, let us note some points that reveal the ugliness of the Mu'tazila's doctrine in application, although as a generalization it may sound pleasant and appear true. *God alone leads to success.*

3) From the Mu'tazila's views is that power does not last for two moments and is not at the time of the action. Therefore, the action actually occurs without any power for it at the time of its existence, which is a sign of compulsion and the occurrence of an act by nature. Then, the indication that the due right of [such an act] is compulsion is as follows: the loss of all the causes by which the action occurs in its time makes the action impossible, and the performer [of the action] is characterized by compulsion. So,[1115] the absence of power through which the action occurs [from the outset] is more worthy of [being considered compulsion].[1116] Thus, [the Mu'tazila]

[1111] This either is to emphasize that power cannot be used for two opposite actions [i.e., obedience and disobedience] or that this group affirms a "power of means and states".

[1112] Reading *ikhtiyār* with MS. 138r and K 264, rather than the suggested emendation of *iḍṭirār* in TA, 350.

[1113] Reading *lā ka-l-nār fī al-taḥrīq* in order to preserve the contrast between natural action and free choice, which justifies the possibility of both obedience and disobedience issuing from a single accident of power.

[1114] In this example, the power relating to two acts, such as obedience and disobedience, is compared to the servant's choice to acquire God's friendship or enmity by believing or disbelieving (see 6.6). If one can do either, this implies that power can be used in two opposing actions.

[1115] Reading *fa-fawt* with MS. 138v and K, 264 as a new sentence.

[1116] This is an *a fortiori* argument. If someone loses the power to do a certain action, then they can be compelled to do another one, even assuming that power is simultaneous with the act. This compulsion is all the more apparent when someone from the outset lacks power at the time of the action.

make [the servant] compelled to what makes him a friend of God Most High or an enemy at the time of free choice.[1117]

One of the things that also explains that [i.e., the Muʿtazilī doctrine leads to compulsion] is their saying: Whoever [in the first moment] intends motion for the second moment to come from him, it inevitably occurs and only an impediment caused by another can prevent it. That is a sign of necessity. Then, [God's] friendship and enmity are made necessary in the same way. The intellect finds this troubling.[1118]

4) The following doctrine of [the Muʿtazila] should also be mentioned: [The servant] is only metaphorically responsible for commands and prohibitions at the time of the act, according[1119] to what the Muslims say [i.e., about the Muʿtazila's view].

The meaning of this [doctrine] is that the servant is commanded [to do the act] by a determinant cause that precedes his act. Therefore, since the servant is no longer commanded by it or prohibited from it [in the second moment], he has not obeyed the command or committed the prohibition of the action at the time of action.[1120] Yet, these are the factors that necessitate the enmity and friendship of God. Thus, [according to the Muʿtazila] these two [outcomes] do not occur in reality because of obedience and disobedience, or because of commands and prohibitions. *Strength comes from God alone.*

On this basis they say: The servant has been commanded to act in the second moment [while in the first moment]; he is commanded to act in the third moment while he is in the second moment; and so on. Thus, one who is commanded never performs what is commanded, but nor does he abandon the command because there is [also] no time in which he can abandon it. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1117] At the very moment that the servant should exercise their free choice to believe or disbelieve they are compelled in reality, since they lack the power of action at that time.

[1118] Or, reading *al-ʿaql* as *al-fiʿl* on MS. 138v: that is: "throwing away the action".

[1119] Reading *li-mā* with the MS. 138v and K, 265.

[1120] The idea here is that the command to act must be responded to at the moment in which the power to act is exercised. A person does not make a freely chosen response to a command except at that precise time. By delaying the act from its power, the Muʿtazila make this impossible. Hence, according to their view, the servant cannot fulfill the command at the time of the act and the act becomes compelled. Moreover, as argued below, the moment in which the act occurs includes the power for a subsequent act which is subject to a new command.

Then, the principle as understood by the intellect is that everyone who is commanded to act tomorrow is not commanded to act now. The same is true for the near future. Therefore, according to reason, one who is ordered to act after the present time is not ordered to act at the present time. Then, according to [the Mu'tazila], one is not commanded to act in the second time, nor is he prohibited from the opposite of that action. In that case, the reality of the command and prohibition is invalid due to what they hold as rationally possible, and their opinion is invalid due to what reason rejects. In addition, they do not attribute power to the servant in that action. Thus, on the basis of their opinion, one may be burdened beyond one's capacity. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, the issue between [the Mu'tazila] and al-Ḥusayn [al-Najjār] is meaningless, because al-Ḥusayn said that everything through which the action of obedience takes place is present in the disbeliever, the only exception being divine protection and facilitation. [The Mu'tazila] agree with him that [the disbeliever] is not characterized by divine protection and facilitation. Therefore, their disagreement is whether [that by which the act occurs] should be named "power" or not. *Strength comes from God alone.*

5) Then, in our opinion, the principle in the matter is as follows: the existence of the action without power for the one that acts nullifies the determinant cause of the action and directs it to another. It is also impossible for the action to come into existence from one who is ignorant of it. Then, the divine address becomes obligatory by means of knowledge. This is the case even though the reality [of knowledge] is not something that is obtained whenever it is sought. The same applies to power: the powerless person is someone for whom no liability occurs due to the absence of that by which he has capacity [i.e., power], just as it does not occur to the insane person due to the absence of that by which he knows [i.e., knowledge]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[6.9. The Appointed Term]

1) Then, [al-Māturīdī] has asked his opponent [i.e., al-Ka'bī] a question to silence him. It is only – God knows best – that the Mu'tazila claim that God Most High determines a certain term for the human life to complete, and it is His act to keep the human being alive during this period. He wills to do this and has apportioned sustenance for him during this time. Then, God provides one of his servants with power and through it he prevents that man from completing the term He has set for him, and he prevents the Lord of the Worlds from realizing what He promised. [The first person] intervenes between Him and His act to ensure that the servant would survive in his body, though He willed [his death]. Thus, the servant hinders his Lord by killing his enemy. Therefore, [the action of the servant] has forced Him to break His promise, has subdued Him and prevented Him from His action. All of this occurs due to Him enabling him to do so. Is this on account of [divine] incapacity and a breaking of norms in terms of rational intelligibility or not?

[Al-Ka'bī] answers like the Muslims [i.e., the People of Monotheism] that this issue falls within the framework that should be suggested in relation to everything: If it did not occur, how would it be included in His knowledge that it was going to occur? This doctrine according to the Muslims is based on accepting that what exists in His knowledge is [what occurs in the world]. Therefore, if in His knowledge and power He had initially determined something different than this period [as the lifespan for that servant], that period and not this one, would have been in His knowledge. Then, [al-Ka'bī] returned to the reality of his own opinion[1121] and said: If the oppressor [i.e., assailant] had killed only because [the victim's] time of death had come, he would not have deserved condemnation. In fact, one deserves to be praised for slaughtering another's sheep, because if he did not, the animal would die [and become impermissible to eat].[1122]

[1121] The implication is that al-Ka'bī does not really believe in, nor is able to consistently hold, the former statement of divine omniscience along with his doctrine that rejects the appointed term.

[1122] In other words, the person who believes that everyone has an appointed term, according to al-Ka'bī, makes the murderer praiseworthy for doing God's work, just as the person who slaughters another's sheep to avoid it dying naturally is to be praised.

Then, [al-Kaʿbī] relates that the following objection was made to him: You [i.e., al-Kaʿbī] bear witness that if the other person had not killed him, his appointed term would not have come. [Al-Kaʿbī] answers: God forbid! On the contrary, perhaps someone else would have killed him or he would have completed his appointed term. Then, [al-Kaʿbī] argues on the basis of [God's] statement, Mighty and Majestic: "Neither is one who is long-lived granted an extension, nor is his lifespan reduced, [but it is in a decree]."[1123] The Messenger of God, upon him be peace, said: "Observing the ties of kinship prolongs life."[1124] So, [the Messenger] informs that [the servant] has a certain known amount [of life], which is increased by observing the ties [of kinship], and it is [recorded] in the tablet as, "If he [observes] the ties [of kinship], his life term is this and if he does not, it is that." Then, [al-Kaʿbī] returns to his folly and based on pure delusion, raises an objection: If it is said, "This [possibility of the extension of life] only involves the removal of hindrance, and nothing else, yet power implies action." [Al-Kaʿbī] answers: Power only includes the removal of incapacity, nothing else. He continues: If power had required me [to act], I would have been involved with and dragged into [the action], so the action would belong to other than myself [i.e., God].[1125]

Shaykh Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said: Whoever thinks carefully about [al-Kaʿbī's] words and the objection that he entertains becomes certain that he has digressed from the line of inquiry. However, we mention his negligence in [the issues] in which he has deviated, so that [the Muʿtazila] would know his excuse in all matters in which he diverged from his opponents due to the [limited] extent of his knowledge about God, exalted is He. Let us say to him: Does God know that [the victim] will be killed or not? If he says, "[Yes], He knows", it is said: Does his murder remove his life and take away his lifespan or not? If [al-Ka'bī] says, "No", existence belies him. If he says, "Yes", he is asked: If [God] knew this, how could He terminate his lifespan and remove his soul from his body through someone other than [the killer]?[1126] And how would it be written on the (Preserved) Tablet: "If [the murderer] does this, it occurs like this, if he does not do this, it occurs like that." That is the attitude of one who does not know what is going to happen. One who knows what will happen writes: "This is the way it will occur. If it were not so, it would be like this. Such-and-such disbelieves and deserves God's wrath. Had he not disbelieved, he would have believed and deserved His love." As for saying, "Either this or that" without saying anything definitive about what will happen, that is the action of those who are ignorant about outcomes. Then, how can this [i.e., the conditional statement] be seen as reporting that an event will happen before it happens? For all people already know that much: So-and-so will either be killed or die, he will either believe or disbelieve, or he will either move or remain still at such-and-such a time. This decree is from the plank (*lawḥ*) found on every ship, not the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*). Rather, it is the Unpreserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḍīʿ*). *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1123] Q. 35:11.

[1124] Al-Bayhaqī, *Shuʿab al-īmān*; al-Ajlūnī, *Kashf al-khafāʾ*, 2:22.

[1125] A hypothetical opponent to al-Kaʿbī's view argues that according to the Muʿtazila, the extension of one's life is only to prevent a cutting short of the full appointed term. But doing something to increase one's life seems to go beyond that, implying action to correspond with power (returning to the debates of 6.8). On the basis of his own position, al-Kaʿbī denies power as more than the rejection of incapacity, and as such it can precede the action. As al-Māturīdī goes on to point out, this response fails to address the relevant question.

2) [As for al-Kaʿbī's] statement: "Were [a servant's] appointed term to come, his appointed term as it exists in God's knowledge would not change by his murder. He is killed just as it is in His knowledge; but either as a forbidden or enjoined killing in accordance with what is in His knowledge." Again, [the servant] believes or disbelieves as in His knowledge. So, that too [i.e., his belief or disbelief] is in His knowledge. Everything is included in God's knowledge of its outcome and to what it shall return. Since what the outcome of it would have been if the servant did not commit that deed is in His knowledge, the same applies to the appointed term. Based on this principle, since God knows that [a person] observed the ties of kinship, then He made his lifespan greater than what it would have been in His knowledge had he not so observed the ties of kinship. This is the case with

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[1126] This is a response to al-Kaʿbī's earlier position that another person could have killed the slain person. Al-Māturīdī is arguing that if God knows that one person is going to kill someone, how could it have been someone else without making the appointed term fixed, contrary to al-Kaʿbī's doctrine.

the verse [quoted above], since it is impossible for the deed of the servant to be outside His knowledge. What they [i.e., the People of Monotheism] say in this matter is intelligible. As regards the verse, the People of Interpretation[1127] said as follows: [The verse above] clarifies the termination of the lifespan and [indicates] that one's life passes with the elapsing of every moment. Another group said: [This verse] is related to the fact that people have lifespans of different lengths, some short and some long. It is not that God first determines a lifespan for someone and then changes His mind, so that He prolongs or shortens it like the action of one who is ignorant or has doubts about his affairs. *Strength comes from God alone.*

3) God the Almighty says: "When their appointed term arrives, then they cannot put it off an hour, nor hasten (it)."[1128] However, in [al-Ka'bī's] words, [the servants'] appointed term does not arrive. On the contrary, they are killed before it comes. Also, by God, He does not prolong life [according to al-Ka'bī]. If [God] cannot fulfill His promise and guarantee that He will continue [a servant's] lifespan until such-and-such time, how is He able to prolong the life of another because of his observing the ties of kinship? Rather, [His servant's] enemy was able to prevent Him from that [by killing His servant]. God is exalted above being described as such.

Then, [al-Ka'bī] is asked: Is it written in the Tablet that:

i) [God] will keep the one killed alive until the end of the term determined for him?

ii) [The servant] himself will survive until [the end of that term]?

iii) He will keep him alive, or he will survive, so long as he is not killed?

If [al-Ka'bī] adopts the first and second options, he accuses [God] of lying in His reports and breaking His promise. If he chooses the third option, he is asked: Did He know that [the victim] would be killed or not? If he says, "No, [He did not know]", he deserves for a gap to be made between his head and his body and to remain in the torment of his Lord forever. If he says, "Yes, [He knew]," the following is said: Why did [God] write of what is not known? For such an attitude [i.e., to write, "...so long as he is not killed"] is the product of the attitude of the ignorant in custom, and the intellects of those who know the Lord refuse to attribute such a thing to Him. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1127] The term is *ahl al-ta'wīl*, i.e., the scholars of Qur'anic interpretation.

[1128] Q. 10:49.

4) Then, one may oppose [al-Ka'bī] with the following case: [Suppose there is] a person whom God knows will not be killed. But [people] want to kill him, so they track him, and attempt to realize their aims with all the means at their disposal. Then, it is as God knew [i.e., he is not killed]. The means [used in the attempted murder] are so effective that you could find no one who would fail to accomplish the act with them. The realization [of the act of murder], on the other hand, would make God a liar. However, [al-Ka'bī] may say, "[God] has impeded [the act of murder]". So, impeding becomes binding on God in every case in which He knows that something will not occur despite the presence of power. Yet if that is binding, then so is His prompting in every case in which He knows that something will occur, though the servant is not pleased with it. Hence, everything good and evil will happen through His hindrance and prompting, which is what [the Mu'tazila] thought that their opponents' doctrine of [predestination] would result in, whereas it is in fact the place that their own understanding has carried them. *Strength comes from God alone.*

5) As for what [al-Ka'bī] mentions of releasing and leaving alone [the polytheists], the speech [dealing with the issue in the verse: "If the associators repent, establish the prayer and pay the alms, then leave their way free"[1129]] may be interpreted in three ways:

i) Lifting difficulty and hindrance [i.e., on those who repent, pray and give alms];

ii) Commanding it [i.e., leaving their way free];

iii) Permitting it [i.e., leaving their way free].

Although all these are unrestricted in the context of goodness, they have the following restriction in the context of evil: [the servant] is not forced and compelled. If such is the case, it is baseless for [al-Ka'bī] to object through that which he mentions [i.e., through the notion that God has impeded the servant]. As for [God] preventing [the assailants from killing someone who was written in His knowledge to not be killed], it is obligatory for him to respond to us. After previously forbidding it, God Most High said: "Then leave their way free."[1130] People's words [of prayer], "O God, give me the power to obey you" are considered praiseworthy, while the words, "O God, leave us alone to obey you" are not. Therefore, it has been established that one of these two has a state that the other does not have [i.e., the power to do good]. Likewise, [al-Kaʿbī] accepts that the action takes place at the moment that the power disappears such that there is no power together with it. But he does not accept that releasing and leaving alone [the polytheists] disappears at the moment of the action, so let him know how far away he is [from comprehending] the things he considers. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1129] Q. 9:5.

[6.10. The Question of Sustenance]

Then, [al-Kaʿbī] speaks on the question of sustenance in a way that cannot be accepted as a question. The approach that should be adopted in this regard is as follows: since God Most High guaranteed sustenance with His statement: "And there is not a beast in the earth but the sustenance thereof depends on God",[1131] it is either held in His possession or given out to feed people. That is:

1) Either one has the power to prevent Him from keeping His promise of sustenance in the respect in which He guarantees it [i.e., in His possession and feeding], so that He breaks His promise and is incapable of keeping to what He has guaranteed. In this case, God will be under the power of another in His action, and He can [only] fulfill His promise and keep [His] covenant through another, which is a grave matter.

2) Or no one has [the power to prevent Him], refuting the idea that one is sustained with what is really another's sustenance in that aspect or that one can [take away what God has determined as sustenance for another and make it sustenance for himself]. If being sustained with another's sustenance was from one's possession of power, this illogical state would apply to him, because he knows that he will demand his sustenance in that aspect [i.e., what God has determined as sustenance for another].

[1130] Q. 9:5.
[1131] Q. 11:6.

[Al-Kaʿbī] said: Al-Warrāq was asked, so he said: They are asked: Is there one who has the power to sin, but avoids it due to his vigilance for the sake of God? If they say, "No, [there is no such person]", they would profess a gravely mistaken doctrine, because they would deny that the prophets [abstained from sin for His sake, even though they had the power to sin]. If they say, "Yes, [there is such a person]," they must admit that [power] precedes the action.

We say, and God alone leads to success: If by power you intend the means, that is, the states of power that inevitably arise if not wasted by the servant, then yes, it is true. All prophets and other good people are like that [i.e., although they could sin, they avoided it because they were mindful of God]. If, by contrast, you mean the power that is together with the action, then your question is impossible and you have become like someone who says: "Is there someone who is mindful of God in [avoiding] perpetuating sins, while he commits them?" This is a meaningless question.[1132] [The questioner] may object to you [al-Warrāq], and say: Is there one of the prophets who is mindful of God in [avoiding] perpetuating a sin that one knows comes from him or is reported so? Whatever he responds to this applies to the first issue.

Then, it is asked: Has God given any of His friends the grace to lack the power to have enmity for Him? If he answers "Yes", he means that, "God has not given His friends the power to disobey Him". Then, he must also admit [the converse] that God has not given His enemies the power to obey Him, and in that is what he stubbornly denies.[1133] If he answers, "No", he claims that [God] has given His friends the power to have enmity for Him. However, one of the teachings [of the Muʿtazila] is that God does not give the power of enmity to His enemies, yet now he has ended up saying that God gives the power [of enmity] to His friends, which is a grave statement.[1134] Then, it is asked: Did God give [His] friend the power of obedience at the time that he was obedient? If he says, "No", the illogicality in His friend's obeying without power is not less than the illogicality in his abstaining from sin without power. On the contrary, [His friend] has the power to abandon sin.[1135] However, [according to al-Kaʿbī], His friend has no power to obey, which is even more illogical.[1136] Then, it is asked: Did a friend [of God] act as a friend of His or did an enemy act as an enemy through an action over which he has power? If he says, "Yes", he accepts that the power is together with the act. If he says, "No", he claims that enmity and friendship are by an action that he lacks the power to perform, which is far-fetched. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1132] Though the power that is together with a given action, here obedience, "could have" applied to disobedience, it is meaningless to say that it "does" so apply in the sense that the servant can be said to "have the power to sin".

[1133] This denial of the immediate power of the human being to act either in obedience or disobedience strikes against a core aspect of Muʿtazilism.

[1134] In other words, the Muʿtazila are known to not even say that God grants the power to disobey God to His enemies. So, how much more severe is conceding that He grants the power to disobey God to His friends?

[Al-Warrāq] asked: Who is more worthy of praise? Someone who were he to have the power to disobey, disobeyed, and he is the Prophet, or someone who were he to have the power to obey, obeyed, yet he is Iblīs? It is answered as follows: If [by power] you refer to the means, it is the first [i.e., the Prophet]. But if you refer to the power together with the action, you have [asked what is] impossible, and the same judgment is upon you regarding [rational] knowledge and tradition. Then, [al-Warrāq] is asked: Who is more obedient to God? Someone who would obey Him if He treated him as a friend, or someone who would be disobedient towards Him if He treated him as an enemy? Whatever answer he gives on this subject, his answer is given in answer to his question above. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Another person said: In the visible world, if a servant is asked, "Why did not you do such-and-such?", there is no graver excuse than to say, "For I did not have the power to do so." The same holds true of the unseen. This is answered as follows: This may be an excuse for [the action] from which the power is prevented, but it is no excuse in the contexts where one has certainly wasted power [by using it for other things] and there is nothing preventing power from being renewed. Likewise, there is no excuse in the visible world more expansive than the [servant] saying: "I did not know Your command and prohibition, nor did I know that my action angered You." For if there had not been such an excuse in regard to what he had been given [in terms of his means] he would have reached [that knowledge], so long as he did not abandon the search. So, the same goes for power.

[1135] For al-Māturīdī, a person is given power at the moment of the action that is instantly spent in the action of obedience or disobedience. Therefore, the same power that is used by the friend of God to obey (and thereby to avoid sin) could have been used (but was not so used) to disobey God.

[1136] He has no power to obey, due to the Muʿtazila answering, "No" to the question about possessing power to obey at the moment of obedience.

Moreover, according to the same logic [as the interlocutor's contention], there is also no graver excuse than [the servant] saying: Because You informed me that I would not perform [that action], I knew as such. So, I said: "If I had performed that action, I would have made You ignorant and a liar. That is why I did not perform that action." Again, [there is no graver excuse than to say]: I have bestowed the greatest grace on You because You gave me the power to perform that action, You put the fate of Your lordship in my hands, and You gave me the power to negate it. Hence, I have done You the greatest favors and provided you the greatest assistance. Whatever answer the adversary gives, this answer will be graver than it.[1137] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[6.11. Enquiry into the Will]

The enquiry into the will may be included in the enquiry into the creation of the actions [of the servants]. [This is] from the following aspect: if the creation [of their actions] is established, along with God choosing and willing them, then the belief in [God's] will is established in the aspect characterized through [His] creating. On the other hand, if [the creation of their actions] is not established, then the belief in [God's will] is negated from the aspect by which one intends the will in terms of willing actions without being dominated or forgetful, as that is the meaning of the reality of will in the visible world. However, the case is different if one means by will the following: "wish", "command", "claim", "contentment", etc. Some of these meanings may not be used in relation to everything about God, and their use in relation to some things is absolutely rejected. *Strength comes from God alone.*

1) It is possible to use [the word "will"] for one of the aforementioned [meanings], as the People of Rational Theology do, but it is correct to use it in the first sense. This is on the basis that the necessity of the doctrine

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[1137] Thus, acting as a *reductio ad absurdum* to the interlocutor's contention concerning power.

that God acts with will in everything requires the doctrine that the actions of the servants are created [by Him]. In addition, it is possible to infer these [other meanings] through things that do not exist in the first one [i.e., in "will"], even if verifying the discourse in them amounts to an acceptance of [the meaning of "will"]. God Most High says: "And whomsoever it is God's will to guide, He expands his bosom unto Islam" until His statement: "[Whomsoever it is His will to send astray, He makes his bosom close and narrow] as if he were engaged in sheer ascent."[1138] [In this verse], God reveals that He wills to guide some people in their actions through His guidance, and to misguide some people by constricting their hearts tightly. God, Mighty and Majestic, says: "Whomsoever God wants to misguide He sends astray, and whomsoever He wants He places on a straight path."[1139] [In this verse], He has distinguished between two groups of people through two wills. Therefore, these verses indicate that God willed for each group through His knowledge of what will happen to them, and [the context of the verse] shows that the term "will" in these two verses is not used in the sense of command or contentment. God Most High has said: "And if We had so willed, We could have given every soul its guidance."[1140] He also said: "Had God willed He could have made you one community."[1141] And: "Had He willed He could indeed have guided all of you."[1142] It is impossible for this will to mean contentment or command, because they are as stated above [i.e., they cannot be used in relation to everything about God, and their use in relation to some things is absolutely rejected.] Therefore, it has been established that He intends in [the verses] the "will" by which the action inevitably occurs. It is impossible that [this will] exists and He says, "If this is so, it will be so".[1143] That things do not take shape as promised by Him requires lying, and God is far exalted above such thing.

2) It is impossible to interpret [His will] as forcing [people] for several reasons:

[1138] Q. 6:125.
[1139] Q. 6:39.
[1140] Q. 32:13.
[1141] Q. 5:48.
[1142] Q. 6:149.
[1143] As in 6.10. the divine will cannot be framed as a series of conditionals: "If this, then that..." Rather it must be put as counterfactuals, "This, but it could have been that".

i) God has informed [people] about the howness of guidance and the whatness of His religion, and that by which its reality exists. Therefore, it is impossible that He wills by these [terms] the opposite of [all] that. However, the case would be different if [God] declared earlier that these terms could have meanings opposite to the meanings that He taught to them. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) The way to know God's oneness and to believe in Him and His messengers is the way of exhaustive inquiry and inference. This is the kind of discourse for which the involuntary is not possible. If involuntary knowledge[1144] was possible in that for which the created human disposition is not suitable [i.e., knowing God], then it would be possible to negate involuntary knowledge in that for which it is appropriate. Hence, it would negate sensory knowledge.[1145] In addition, all these [i.e., to know His oneness, to believe in Him and His messengers] are obedience and conforming to the command, while compulsion abolishes all of these, so it is as if ultimately God said: "Had He willed, He would have prevented you from believing and from [having] one single religion", which is an illogical statement. For He declared that if He had willed, He would have gathered all of you upon right guidance.[1146] However, some of them believed by their own free choice. If the rest of the people had been compelled, God would not have gathered the people [i.e., together with those believing voluntarily], but would have prevented them from what they had refused of His religion and obedience, which is far-fetched and illogical.[1147]

[1144] This renders *'ilm al-iḍṭirār*, which is often termed *'ilm al-ḍarūrī*. In epistemic terms, the concept refers to the self-evidence and non-inferential nature of the knowledge in question. Yet al-Māturīdī wants to highlight that this knowledge is not something that one arrives at by choice through investigation, but that it is experienced involuntarily, with significant moral repercussions. Hence "involuntary knowledge" seems the clearest term.

[1145] If taken formally, this would be a fallacy, as there would seem to be no automatic reason why involuntary knowledge beyond the natural human senses would negate its production within the senses. A more charitable reading could be that al-Māturīdī is worried about epistemic reliability. What he intends might be sketched as follows: If something that falls outside of our natural sense perception can be taken as involuntary knowledge, then the same could be the case for any number of additional things. At that point, our sensory knowledge is no longer reliable.

[1146] See e.g., Q. 10:99 and 32:13.

[1147] The basis for the point that al-Māturīdī is making is that if knowledge of God is invol-

Also, if people had undergone compulsion and subjugation, they would not have achieved anything. This leads back to the [fundamental] belief of human beings and that every substance in its created disposition is a rightly guided believer. On the contrary, from [their substance] many people receive guidance [but are not compelled to believe]. [The doctrine of involuntary knowledge] would be to say that the statement "had God willed" is meaningless. Again, according to this understanding, the following verse would lose its meaning: "And if your Lord willed, all who are in the earth would have believed together."[1148]

Another evidence showing the error of interpreting His will as forcing [the servants] is His statement: "And if We had so willed, We could have given every soul its guidance, but the word from Me concerning evildoers took effect: that I will fill Hell [with the jinn and mankind together]."[1149] His willing for goodness does not wipe out what He has declared will definitely happen [i.e., some evil]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

God says: "Whom God wills He sends astray, and whom He wills He places on a straight path."[1150] According to the Muʿtazila, God has willed to guide all people to [the right path]. [That would mean] God, Mighty and Majestic, promised that whatever He willed would happen, but it did not happen. God, Mighty and Majestic, also said: "And say not of anything: Lo! I shall do that tomorrow, except if God wills."[1151] The "thing" in the verse includes good deeds. Therefore, according to the doctrine of [the Muʿtazila], the phrase "if God wills" is senseless because He has already willed it.[1152] If the thing in question does not happen, it is as if the servant has been commanded to lie [by being commanded to say, "if God wills"], because the

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untary, then the religious and moral test of the human condition is destroyed. In that circumstance, everyone would believe, and so God would have to reverse what He says in the Qur'an that He could have gathered all the people together in guidance. Moreover, in this scenario, He would be preventing people from the disbelief that they would have followed if they were not made into believers involuntarily.

[1148] Q. 10:99.

[1149] Q. 32:13.

[1150] Q. 6:39.

[1151] Q. 18:23-24.

[1152] Al-Māturīdī's point relies on the Muʿtazilī doctrine that God's will is His creation (see 6.11 (6)), and thus can be temporally prior, leading to the problems that he goes on to identify. Otherwise, he also holds that God has "willed", albeit in a timeless sense.

servant was commanded to say so, but it did not happen so. If the thing in question is an evil, God does not will it. Therefore, according to the Muʿtazila, it is meaningless to say, "if God wills". *Strength comes from God alone.*

3) God, Mighty and Majestic, said: "[Your Lord] is doer of what He wills."[1153] [In this verse, God], lofty is His praise, commends Himself for doing whatever He wills. According to the Muʿtazila, the things that [God] willed from the category of the good deeds that arose from human beings – from that which were they to gather together and try to count them, they would not reach one-thousandth of what He intended – He did not perform them. Yet God, Mighty and Majestic, commended Himself for them. Then, from their grave statements is the following: "If there had been a compelling[1154] will in the presence of God, the creation would have been as He had said." Thus, who may confirm this claim that the power and will to perform this work belong to Him, after people see all the breaking of His promise and incapacity in His deed? Or, when there is belief in the promise of one who promises the people that He will do innumerable things by His will, and then breaks His promise, how is [His promise] believed and who will trust His word from now on? When will [the people] fear the threat of one who has such position according to [the Muʿtazila]? So, if He wanted to reveal His incapacity, failure to keep His promise and those things that do not fit the description of wisdom, what thing would bring it to light so that they would know it according to the teachings of the Muʿtazila? Our Lord is majestic and exalted above this.

God Most High said: "And when We would destroy a township, We send commandment to its folk who live at ease, and afterward they commit abomination therein..."[1155] [In this verse, God] has informed that He wills to destroy a people and a township due to its people's transgression before they committed it. If God had not willed them to transgress, as He knew, but rather willed them to obey and also had willed to destroy them, this would have been injustice. In that case, it has been established that [God] wills whatever comes from them or knows that. Noah said to his people: "My counsel will not profit you if I were minded to advise you, if God's will is to keep you astray."[1156] You [al-Ka'bi or the Mu'tazili interlocutor] say, "God never wills [to keep him astray]", so you turn Noah's word [to a meaning] that no human mind would ever think. "And Moses said: Our Lord! Lo! You have given Pharaoh and his chiefs splendour and riches in the life of the world, Our Lord! that they may lead men astray from Your way."[1157] You say, "God has not given them [wealth] for that but given [it] to them to guide them." God says, "Those are they for whom the will of God is that He cleanse not their hearts."[1158] But you say, "On the contrary, God willed [to cleanse their hearts]." God says, "He whom God dooms unto sin, [you (by your efforts) will avail him nothing against God]"[1159], you say, "God did not will [to cause them to sin]" or "This is a trial". Whenever the Messenger of God used to will or want something not to happen, he was told: "You (by your efforts) will avail him nothing against God."[1160] Again, God Most High says: "Let not the disbelievers think that our respite to them is good for themselves..."[1161] and, "Nor let their wealth nor their (following in) sons dazzle you..."[1162] [In these two verses, God] informed what He willed for [disbelievers and hypocrites] through the blessings that He bestowed on them. But [the Mu'tazila] said: "God does not will [to do anything to them]." What is said to the like of such people is only what is said to Jews and Christians: "Do you know better than God?"[1163]

[1153] Q. 11:107, 85:16.
[1154] Reading *jabr* with MS. 151v and K, 289.
[1155] Q. 17:16.

God, exalted is His praise, said: "I will fill hell with the jinn and men all together."[1164] So, let us ask [the Mu'tazila]: Does God, Mighty and Majestic, mean that He will fulfill what He has promised, or does He mean to belie His promise and nullify His threat? If they were to adopt the second option, they would have said a grave thing and described God by folly and lying. Saying such a thing is sufficient as to one's contempt. If [the Mu'tazila] mean that He fulfills [the promise made in this verse, i.e., adopt the first option], they are asked: Did [God] want to fulfill [His promise] by willing that they [i.e., disbelievers and hypocrites] obey Him, so he fulfills it while they obey or disobey Him? If they take the first option, [God] has willed injustice, for the act [of putting the obedient in Hell] is injustice. Therefore, His will for this act to come into existence is to want the act of injustice to be an act for Himself. However, God Most High has said, "God wills no injustice for (His) servants."[1165] If [the Mu'tazila] adopt the second option, they have submitted to the truth and have adopted justice. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1156] Q. 11:34.
[1157] Q. 10:88.
[1158] Q. 5:41.
[1159] Q. 5:41.
[1160] Q. 5:41.
[1161] Q. 3:178.
[1162] Q. 9:85.
[1163] Q. 2:140.
[1164] Q. 32:13.

Again, God Most High says: "It is God's will to assign them no portion in the Hereafter."[1166] And for one whom He wills all goodness to come from, He has willed a portion in the Hereafter. God Most High says: "You desire the lure of this world and God desires (for you) the Hereafter"[1167] and, "God would make the burden light for you..."[1168] Thus, [God] willed [a portion of] the Hereafter for the believers and that has happened, and [He willed worldly goods] for the disbelievers and that has happened. It is not possible that He willed the first [i.e., Hereafter for the believers] and they remained obedient. In that case, it has been established that God wills the actions that come from human beings. *Protection from sins and salvation is by God alone.*

4) God Most High says: "You shall not will, unless God wills."[1169] Since they will not will unless He wills, it is impossible for them not to will when God wills or to will when He does not. For that [i.e., denying the divine will] is the sign of lying that He has made detestable to reason. *God alone leads to success.*

Then, there is a tradition among Muslims to say: "What God wills will happen, and what He does not will does not happen." There is no doubt in the hearts of the Muslims about the veracity of this statement, and there is no opposing thought in the imaginations to their actions, which are both freely chosen and compelled, being by [God's] will. If it was possible that God wills a thing and it does not happen, and He wills a thing not to happen, but it does happen, the former is not more worthy with respect to His attributes of lordship than the latter. Everything has a place. Rather, the [claimed] superiority of the second to the first does not pose a problem for them. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1165] Q. 40:31.
[1166] Q. 3:176.
[1167] Q. 8:67.
[1168] Q. 4:28.
[1169] Q. 76:30.

In addition, the Muslims have the custom when they are afraid that they will not be able to keep their promise and that they will break their oath of saying, "God willing". Thus, it has been established that the belief of the majority of the Muslims was one and the same before the distortion of the Mu'tazila. This is similar to [the Prophet's] saying: "Every child is born upon the natural disposition, except that his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Zoroastrian in nature."[1170] [This saying shows] the obligation of monotheism and the indication of the oneness of God Most High until confusion arises from the people mentioned [i.e., the parents]. Likewise, the belief of the will of God was held by everyone before the confusion caused by the Mu'tazila. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Again, people have the custom of supplicating for [God] to will ease and goodness for them. They can only have complete peace of heart about the reality of that if He truly has a will. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Also, adopting the idea that, "Whatever Iblīs wills happens and whatever he does not will does not happen" is a grave mistake in the hearts of the people. It comes from knowledge of the innumerable evils in the world and on that basis excluding good from it and upholding the existence of the will of Iblīs. But it is established that the realities of things depend on [God's] will for them, and that they are prevented from being realized again by His will. Therefore, the Muslims consider it beautiful to attribute the truths of things to God and consider it repugnant to attribute them to Iblīs and other sinners. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, taking account of what the necessity of reason requires also mandates this [i.e., the existence of divine will]. For everyone knows that his actions do not come out as he wants in terms of beauty, ugliness, pleasure, pain, love, anger, etc. Thus, there is another's will in the emergence of [people's] actions, and the actions emerge according to that will. *God alone leads to success.*

[1170] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, al-Janā'iz*, 92; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ, al-Qadar*, 25; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan, al-Sunna*, 17; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan, al-Qadar*, 5.

Again, bringing a thing into existence under another's authority and in his domain in a way that he does not want and does not will is a sign of weakness and subjugation. It is impossible for one of this description to be a lord or deity. That is why God must be characterized [as having a will]. *God alone leads to success.*

Also, if God Most High had willed for the disbelievers[1171] to be different from the way He knew and foretold them to be, He would have willed Himself to be a liar and foolish. It is impossible for one with such a will to be a deity or lord. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Again, from the point of view of wisdom, everyone who performs an action, but wills a result different from that which comes from it is either ignorant of its outcomes or performs that action in vain. However, God Most High is majestic above these two qualities. Cannot one see that building for a thing [i.e., a project] that he knows will not happen is absurd. However, if something different from what he intends occurs through [the action], it means that he was ignorant of it.

Furthermore, the mistakes that are known in the visible world are of two types:

i) The emergence of an action upon a determination of which one is ignorant.

ii) Its occurrence in other than the way intended. If God Most High willed through what he granted [to people] a thing different from the result that occurred, His action would be in error according to how He has defined the erroneous action for us. *God alone leads to success.*

5) Again, according to the course of affairs in the visible world, everyone who wills to be friends with another who chooses to be his enemy does so due to weakness and cowardice. In that case, it is impossible for God Most High to will to be friends with Iblīs and those who choose to be His enemies. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Also, the condition for one's action to be freely chosen is the will, whereas one whose action is compelled cannot will [the action]. If God had not willed the servant's action to be as it is, He would have been compelled [in this determination].[1172] Therefore, it is impossible for one person to will the act of another person, because the action of [the latter] cannot emerge as the former intends; [rather], it is named "wishing" [not "willing"].[1173] On this basis, if it is imagined that something would happen that He did not will, His will is reduced to a mere wish.

[1171] Reading *al-kafara* with MS. 153r.

Moreover, if it had been ordained for us that a prophet's prophecy was just human speech [i.e., not God's speech], it would be a sin for us to will that [i.e., to utter it] as a sign [of God's existence], though it would not be a sin for [the prophet].[1174] Hence, it would be the same if God made us know that He would inform us about [someone's belief in Him], that He knew that it would not come to exist [i.e., in the case of the disbeliever]. According to this, He does not will that act of belief as required by wisdom. For there is no disagreement over the fact the servant should not ask God to guide those whom he knows God will not lead unto the right path, such as Iblīs, and therefore should not say, "O God, guide him", because he knows this will not happen. Then, it is impossible for us to will such a thing. Now, since it is out of the question for us to will what we know will not happen, it is impossible to say this in relation to God, too, because that only occurs to use due to our ignorance of His state. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, let us ask about one who wills the cursing of the Messenger of God to be like cursing Iblīs in terms of gravity and sin. Is not such a person impertinent, foolish and a disbeliever? The answer to this question must be, "Yes". Then, he is asked: Is not praiseworthy the person who wills the cursing of the Messenger of God to be a grave matter incomparable with cursing anyone else from the creation? The answer must be, "Yes". It is said: Then, from whom does this person will this act of cursing to emanate? For it is impossible for this action not to originate from someone, old or young.

[1172] If God's creation of the action of the human being had not involved His will, then rather than His choice to create, it would have been compelled action.

[1173] That is, the name for "willing" for an action to occur in another body is "wishing", as in: "I wish that you would leave!" It is "wishing" because it is imperfectly realized.

[1174] This argument is extremely compressed. The idea seems to be that if a prophet spoke only with human speech, then in principle anyone could utter the same words. Yet it would be sinful for a non-prophet to utter them as if they stemmed from their own prophecy. The point is again that one cannot "will" the action of another, and by extension that God's will is deficient if any action occurs without it.

Therefore, he should say: [This action must originate] from a disbeliever. This indicates that it is permissible to will the act of disbelief in an aspect that cannot be criticized. *God alone leads to success.*

6) Then, the principle on which the Muʿtazila rely is as follows: God's will is nothing but His creation,[1175] and – according to al-Kaʿbī's interpretation – [the will] consists of His not being overcome or compelled in His action. However, [the Muʿtazila] gave the meaning [of will] completely for the deeds of the servants. Therefore, there is no point in denying the will, and this is its meaning [when applied to God], after attributing it to everyone. *God alone leads to success.*

In our opinion, the principle is as follows: if we are asked about God willing the action of the disbelievers in its present state, we can draw attention to two aspects:

i) To speak unrestrictedly on this [i.e., the disbelief of the disbelievers] as it is understood from will [and not to specify one of the meanings of the word "will"];

ii) Or to prevent the unrestricted use of the word "will" when the purpose of the questioner is not understood, or it is feared that he will act stubbornly about it. This is to say that "will" has various meanings in linguistic conventions, one of which is "wish". This meaning has been negated from God in relation to everything. The second meaning is to command and to call to it. Therefore, this is negated from God regarding every action whose agent is blameworthy. The third is to be content with a thing and accept it. This is also negated from God for every deed that is blameworthy. The fourth is to interpret will as the negation of defeat and the occurrence of the action as determined and willed by someone. This is the sense in which we use [the will in relation to God], and this sense has been agreed upon. Whoever denies [this] after the giving of this meaning has determined will against what is literally intended by it. This meaning is necessary for us [in regard to Him], because He creates everything. It is affirmed that He is characterized by not being compelled or forced in what He creates. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1175] This is like all active attributes on their view. See 2.12.1 and al-Balkhī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt*, 255.

[6.12. A Critique of al-Ka'bi's Views on the Will]

1) Now let us point out al-Ka'bi's false views on this issue. He asks himself what is meant by the popular statement, "What God wills happens and what He does not will does not happen", and he answers with the following words when interpreting His statement, "God is the creator of everything":[1176] There is no praise in intending to curse [the Prophet].

We have already explained this issue. The reality of cursing lies in [the curser] willing to be a liar about that which He informs; otherwise, there is no cursing in His willing the action of cursing for the one who curses him obscenely. Knowledge indicates to this [view] in two ways:

i) In the first, [will] is ignorance and a mistake [because of the curser wanting to be a liar about what God has told him about the Prophet].

ii) In the second one, [will] is wisdom [because God wisely wills the cursing act of the one who chooses to curse] and it is a case of hitting the target.

[Al-Ka'bī] took the divine will in the sense of subjugating [the servant], and we have already explained his misunderstanding, as it is impossible for will to mean subjugation in this and other [contexts]. This is because [will] is in belief and disbelief, lying and truthfulness. If [God] had created disbelief and lying without them actually coming from anyone, then He would be a disbelieving liar in the sight of everyone who identifies the creation of something with the thing itself. Therefore, the [Mu'tazila] are forced to say: The Muslims' statement, "What God wills happens [and what He does not will does not happen]" should be interpreted as, "If God willed, He would disbelieve and lie." This is an interpretation with which a madman would not be pleased to adopt, let alone the generality of Muslims. *God alone leads to success.*

2) Then, [al-Ka'bī] digressed from the ongoing debate by bringing up another point against the Muslims. He claims that they say: "What God loves happens and what He does not love does not happen." This has not been heard from the devil, let alone a Muslim.

[1176] Q. 6:102.

Then, [al-Ka'bī] countered with the statement of [the Muslims]: "The command of God is effective and cannot be thwarted." This statement has been interpreted in two ways:

i) This is the command of existentiation, as in the following verse: "But His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says unto it: Be! and it is."[1177] Nothing can thwart this, and the whole act of creation is included in it. It is like the first one [i.e., the statement "What God wills happens"].

ii) By [command], the intent is the reality of the requirement of the command, which cannot be thwarted in the aspect by which it is a command [i.e., nothing can stop God's command from being binding]. When the cause for the issuing of the command does not occur, the command does not exceed its limit and the will ceases because it is something brought into existence. The command is there for action to be performed on its account, not to make it occur. Does [al-Ka'bī] not see that everyone who has free choice in his action is characterized by will, yet it cannot be said that [everyone] is "commanded", because it is impossible for God to be so qualified?[1178] *Strength comes from God alone.*

3) As regards the following verse, "[Unto whomsoever of you wills to walk straight,] and you will not, unless (it be) that God wills, the Lord of Creation"[1179] [al-Ka'bī] says: "To walk straight (*istiqāma*) is by [the will of the servant]." [Al-Māturīdī replies:] This is false, because perhaps God wills, so that [the servant's action] does not occur. Thus, it is only possible for things to happen in the way that accords with our doctrine: If God wills, it inevitably happens.

Then, al-Ka'bī said: "Does God will to be cursed?" His question is mistaken. On the contrary, he should ask: Does God will the act of cursing that comes from the curser to be obscene and loathsome? Then [al-Ka'bī] said: "God forbid! For He prohibited [cursing] and was angry at this action. No wise one would do that [i.e., will his own cursing]."

4) The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: [Al-Ka'bī] is asked: Does the Wise will that he would be a liar and foolish if he wills? If

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[1177] Q. 36:82.

[1178] Hence, "will" cannot be understood as meaning "command" as al-Ka'bī claims.

[1179] Q. 81:28-29.

he says "Yes" in response, it is clear that he does not know the Wise. If he says, "No", he must accept that God has will because lacking will requires Him to be a liar and foolish. *Strength comes from God alone.* His prohibition and anger are not the aspect of which we are speaking here [i.e., in the aspect of willing]. The things we have mentioned are sufficient [for proof] within the chapter of the creation of human acts.

Now, if God has willed one who He knew would choose enmity to Him to be among His enemies, this is to remove the meaning of powerlessness [from Him] and to reveal that He is independent of him and his actions. This is as God says: "God is altogether independent of (His) creatures."[1180] [Al-Ka'bī] claimed that the meaning of will is invincibility, and it is found therein, so let him say what he wants. There is a response to him in the first question [i.e., "Does the wise one will what would make him a liar and foolish if he so wills?"]. As for al-Ka'bī's answer regarding "love" and "contentment", it is impossible to say, "God loves Iblīs and is pleased with him as well as filthy and disgusting things", even though God willed for them to exist. The same holds true of the act of disbelief, and ugly forms and substances [it is impossible to say that God likes them even though He has willed them.] *God knows best.*

[Al-Ka'bī] responded to the objection that the things that God did not will would increase His dominion [if he willed them] through contentment and love.[1181] However, we have indicated the distinction between [the will] and [His contentment or love] in terms of being His act.[1182] Then, [al-Ka'bī] continued his discourse as follows: If God is able to prevent [something] and does not prevent it, it is not prevented. In this case, he is answered as follows: If He has the power to prevent it and does not will to prevent it, His lack of will indicates that He is not able to do so. One of the arguments that demonstrate this is as follows. If He subdued [the disbelievers to enter] Islam [yet] they did not become Muslims despite this subjugation, this would show that He was not able to do so. This is the reality of overcoming and subjugating in the visible world. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1180] Q. 29:6.

[1181] That is, someone can object to al-Ka'bī's equation of will with contentment and loving to suggest this conclusion.

[1182] Al-Māturīdī distinguishes between the will as a divine attribute and the action of divine contentment or love as His action.

5) Al-Ka'bi opposed [the notion of divine will] based on [the disbelievers'] abandonment [of the act of belief]. He is answered as follows: There is no contrariness to the will [of God] in the abandonment [of the disbelievers' act of belief]. Therefore, [this abandonment] is included in what we have mentioned about the increase in His dominion of what He does not will.[1183] *God alone leads to success.*

[Al-Ka'bi] has objected to [the idea that failing to prevent actions does not signify being unable to do but unwilling to do] through the analogy to it in the visible world, but [this objection] is mistaken in two aspects:

i) Our earthly rulers are not able to prevent [the actions of others]; otherwise, they would prevent everything they did not will.

ii) This [i.e., the createdness of human actions] is not under the dominion and sovereignty of earthly kings, since they have none over the deeds of others. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, [al-Ka'bī] asked himself that if something's lying outside of His knowledge has an outcome of ignorance, why should not its being outside of His will require a deficiency, which is incapacity? [Al-Ka'bī] answered [this question as follows]: It [i.e., a thing's being outside of the will of God] does not have an outcome of deficiency, but dislike. One may object to this answer as follows: Dislike of the prohibition is indeed like this, whereas overcoming creates deficiency.[1184] There is evidence in the Book of God that there is a distinction between love and contentment, and will, according to His statement: "He is not content with disbelief for His servants"[1185]; "God loves not corruption"[1186]; "Truly God loves those who turn unto Him"[1187]; and "God loves not aggressors."[1188] God says in relation to will: "Whomsoever God wills He sends astray, and whomsoever He wills He places on a straight path"[1189] and other than it from verses that require the specification of love and contentment and the generality of will. In addition, while [God] is characterized by [will] in His actions, He is not characterized by contentment and love. [Al-Kaʿbī] reduced [the divine] will to power, so that He made it take the ruling of compulsion. Therefore, according to him, the power [of will] requires [compulsion].

[1183] See 6.12 (4).

[1184] The objection is that just as ignorance is the result of falling outside of knowledge, the deficiency of incapacity is the result of falling outside of the will. Al-Ka'bī's response is that no deficiency is found in falling outside of the will, because the will is defined by God's contentment, so what is outside that is God's dislike. The counter response to him is that what God dislikes is the outcome of failing to abide by His prohibition. Yet the meaning of overcoming within the concept of will leads to the deficiency of whatever it fails to overcome.

[1185] Q. 39:7.

[1186] Q. 2:205.

[1187] Q. 2:222.

[1188] Q. 2:190.

However, the principle in this matter is as follows: love and anger are two meanings that become necessary with the deeds of the servants, whereas will is not like that, for there is no meaning in the acts of the servants that requires [God's] will.[1190] But if by "will" is meant "contentment" or "wish",[1191] the case is different. *Strength comes from God alone.*

6) In the visible world, a man may do something that he is displeased with and does not love, but it is impossible for an action to exist that he does not will. Likewise, the meaning of will precedes the action according to [the Muʿtazila], but for us it is a meaning that occurs simultaneously with [the action], and there is no aspect of [the will] after it. The matter of contentment, anger, and love etc., on the other hand, is customarily after the action with no endpoint. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, [al-Kaʿbī] brought as evidence His statement Most High: "God wills ease for you."[1192] Again, He has said: "God does not will hardship for you."[1193] However, disbelief is the hardest thing [i.e., so it is impossible for God to will disbelief for the servant]. [Al-Kaʿbī] is answered as follows: "will" in this context means to allow, to permit and to give a dispensation, which have nothing to do with belief. So, the same is true about willing hardship.

Additionally, if will was taken in both senses [i.e., in the sense of willing belief and disbelief], then the [relevant] aspect is that they are a group who have believed, and it is not possible for them to act in reality other than as God wills. Hence, had He willed belief in relation to the disbeliever, nothing but belief would have been realized, just as none other than belief has been realized for one in relation to whom He willed belief. On this basis is His statement Most High: "And whomsoever it is God's will to guide, [He expands his bosom unto Islam]".[1194] The following of His statements supports this understanding: "It is God's will to assign them no portion in the Hereafter."[1195] And He makes an explanation about the believers: "[You desire the lure of this world] and God wills (for you) the Hereafter."[1196] [This verse] shows that He willed the Hereafter for whomsoever He willed the act of belief, and [He did not will the Hereafter] for whomsoever He did not will [the act of belief]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1189] Q. 6:39.

[1190] That is, God's will realizes His own actions, including creating the deeds of the servants. But it does not attach to their actions in the way that His love and anger do.

[1191] The word is *al-tamannī* and must be taken here as a synonym for "love", as attached to the deeds of the servants, not an unfulfilled will as discussed in 6.11 (5).

[1192] Q. 2:185.

[1193] Q. 2:185.

7) Again, [al-Ka'bī] cited as evidence the statement of God Most High: "But God never wills injustice to His servants."[1197]

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: We say likewise. Whoever wills enmity to one who is hostile to him or who commits injustice in an ugly and outrageous way, [God] wills justice for that person, not injustice. As God Most High says: "And We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between them in vain."[1198] Then, He said in relation to the Qur'an: "Falsehood cannot come at it from before it or from behind it."[1199] God has named a certain thing "falsehood" here, but He has not named the creation of that thing "falsehood". Likewise, [His] willing the act of disbelief to emerge from the disbeliever in a false and unjust way does not mean that He wills injustice for [His] servants. The interpretation of this is His statement: "Your Lord is not at all a tyrant to His servants."[1200]

Then, if we consider it, we will see that it is possible, because it is justice for God to will what He knows will happen because He did not will to punish him for a thing he did not commit, but to requite him for his action. *God is the All-Sufficient.*

[1194] Q. 6:125.
[1195] Q. 3:176.
[1196] Q. 8:67.
[1197] Q. 40:31.
[1198] Q. 38:27.
[1199] Q. 41:42.
[1200] Q. 41:46.

8) Then, [al-Ka'bi] was asked about the will of the Messenger of God to defeat the polytheists, so he replied that [the Messenger] said that he intended to make them reflect about that to which he called them.

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: Is defeat obedience or a sin? Likewise, the state [of the polytheists] until the moment they begin to reflect, is it a continuance in sin? [Al-Ka'bī] must say, "It is a sin" [to this question]. In that case, it is possible to will [defeat] for some benefit and without [sinful] intention. Similar is the case with His statement: "I would rather you should bear the punishment of the sin against me, and you own sin [and become one of the owners of the fire]."[1201] Accordingly, it is permissible to will a sinful act without the intention of committing a sin. Likewise, all the believers' sins come from the sinners as actions, even if they did not intend to disobey God. Rather, if they intend to disobey Him, they become disbelievers. This clarifies that willing an act that emerges as a sin from its agent is not like willing for sin [directly]. This is how God wills the act of the disbeliever, so that it arises from him as a sin; or [how He wills the disbeliever's] act of cursing so that it becomes an ugly curse. It is not like willing cursing and sin. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, [al-Ka'bī] objected by means of the Messenger of God's contentment with the defeat of [the polytheists].[1202] This is baseless because their defeat was not [the action] belonging to the Messenger of God or to God such that one speaks because of it of contentment and lack of contentment. *Strength comes from God alone.*

9) Then, the following objection has been levelled at [al-Ka'bī]: Most of God's servants became disbelievers by the will of Iblīs. However, God willed obedience for them. So, the will of Iblīs is more effective than the will of God in His dominion and sovereignty. [Al-Ka'bī] replied to this with [his doctrine on] contentment, love and anger [i.e., that will have these meanings]. In fact, we have already explained the difference between [will and these meanings]. [This difference can be shown] by someone who is content with an action or gets angry without it occurring while

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[1201] Q. 5:29.

[1202] This is an example meant to substantiate the idea that "contentment" is meant and therefore God can be attributed with it in place of "will".

performing the action. But this is impossible with respect to will [because it must be simultaneous with the action]. In that case, it has been established that [will] is a condition for the action in the context in which [any] incapacity is manifest [i.e., the moment of the action] because the action of one with free choice is not without will. Again, we do not accept the idea that God loves or is content with one whom He knows does not believe, because [love and contentment] are required by the action [i.e., by doing what God commands]; it is far-fetched to say that God [loves and is content with] one who does not act. As for will, we have already explained it. *God knows best.*

The principle in this matter according to custom is that the action takes place voluntarily, involuntarily or heedlessly. Then, it is impossible for God, exalted is He, to be characterized by the involuntary or heedless in the act of the servant. Therefore, it has been established that He is characterized by will. However, the only meaning that the Muʿtazila attribute to God in terms of will is that the world[1203] originated without necessity after it did not exist. However, this meaning [i.e., originating without necessity after it did not exist] is in every being in the world. Hence, there is no basis to negate them according to their teaching.[1204] *Protection from sins is with God.*

Then, [al-Kaʿbī] said: The will of Iblīs is wishing, and if the servants willed, they would not disbelieve. But God has the power to prevent [the disbelievers] by subjugating them.

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: We say to him, "You have told the truth." However, while will requires overcoming [something in terms of the occurrence of action], wishing does not. How, then, did the wish of His enemy [i.e., Iblīs] prevail over His will? [Al-Kaʿbī's] statements such as, "God is able and subjugates [thus making believers believe]" are the products of bewilderment and illogicality. It is not possible for belief to be realized by compulsion.

[1203] This word occurs in both Arabic editions as "*ʿilm*" (knowledge), but this seems to be a misreading of *ʿālam* (world)" (*Translator*).

[1204] The mere feature of originating in this way is not a disputed doctrine, as al-Māturīdī agrees with it. Therefore, it cannot provide the basis for a refutation.

10) Then, [al-Ka'bi] stated that it may be said: Have you ever seen a wise person who was able to prevent his servant from doing something which [the wise person] neither wills nor prevents [the servant from willing]?[1205] [Al-Ka'bi] answered that [such control] would be compulsion. However, this [answer] is erroneous, because according to us [the wise person, and by analogy God] wills [that thing], and prevention is not included in the condition of the willed thing.[1206] Then, [al-Kaʿbī] said: [The fact that the wise person does not prevent his servant who does something that he does not will] can be justified in two ways:

i) On the basis that [the wise person] does not will it.

ii) Or, as a requirement of [his] governance, that it is impossible for him to prevent it.

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: If you seek to determine [the wise person, i.e., God's action] through the visible world, you will only find that he lacks the power to do it or never had the will to do it.[1207]

[Al-Kaʿbī] said: "[There is a type of will] that requires prevention." This indicates that the prevention – if it is necessary – does not happen by itself, but by a cause. If the cause in question requires compulsion, then it is said: he lacks power over it, and this is the case even if it is not necessary. Or perhaps he possesses subjugation without excessive force, but that is not possible according to us [i.e., al-Māturīdī], as it leaves what is customary. *Strength comes from God alone.*

11) Again, [al-Kaʿbī] responds to the objection based on His statement, "And whomsoever it is God's will to guide..."[1208] saying that the interpretation of this verse is well-known: whoever obeys Him, He will reward him from his subtle mercies, which no one else can do. He names him by

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[1205] Al-Kaʿbī accepts in the previous response (6.12 (7)) that at least in some cases God can prevent the actions of servants by subjugating them. The contention then comes as to how the analogy can be drawn that someone wise (i.e., God) can do this without willing it Himself or preventing the servant from exercising their own will.

[1206] Since according to al-Māturīdī's opinion God wills every action, the idea of prevention becomes meaningless for him. It has only been introduced polemically because of the difficulty that it causes al-Kaʿbī.

[1207] In other words, the end result of al-Kaʿbī's position is that he denies power or will for God.

[1208] Q. 6:125.

honorable names, He gives lofty rulings for him, rewarding his obedience, so that his desire for Him increases. In fact, He says, "While as for those who walk aright, He adds to their guidance."[1209] Whoever disobeys Him, He prevents him from what has been mentioned, and constricts his chest as described [in the verse]. However, He does not do this to anyone at the outset. The verse I have mentioned above, and the following verse constitute evidence for this: "God only misleads miscreants by [this similitude]."[1210] Then, [al-Kaʿbī] said: It is unthinkable for this to happen at the outset and without deserving enmity or friendship for two reasons:

i) [God] has no indulgence and favoritism.

ii) Whoever is the slightest bit discriminatory towards his servants cannot condemn any of them.

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: As for [al-Kaʿbī's] claim that the interpretation of the verse is well-known, this indicates his ignorance of the well-known and the unknown, and that he turned the story upside down. Then, it is a mistake for [al-Kaʿbī] to associate this verse with [the period] after the one's public profession of Islam, because He says: "And whomsoever it is God's will to guide, He expands his bosom unto Islam."[1211] Therefore, [God] attributes Islam to someone because He has opened his heart, not that he opened his heart after he found Islam with him. Then, even worse than that is the state of [al-Kaʿbī] in his insolence towards God by saying that such thing [i.e., opening one's heart to Islam] would be indulgence and favoritism. For it is well-known that one whose personality consists of such internal insolence will not reveal it and will not contradict himself with things that he is not obliged to [i.e., he will not make self-criticism unless he has to do so]. However, he has been punished for failing to know God and for changing His Book from its original meaning in order to establish his sect that fosters heresy. We seek refuge in God from being forsaken!

Then, [al-Kaʿbī] is asked: Is the heart of the person who becomes a Muslim opened for him at the time of becoming a Muslim, and the heart of one who disbelieves constricted at the time of his disbelief, or are [Muslims and disbelievers] the same in terms of the opening and constriction [of their hearts]? If [al-Ka'bī] answers, "The two are the same", it will become clear to whoever remembers the beginning of his religion, be it Islam or disbelief, that this is a falsehood from him. Then, [al-Ka'bī] named what every Muslim and disbeliever knows to come into being[1212] from God – by separating from the truth, barring it and preventing it – indulgence and favoritism, thus revealing his own insolence and folly. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1209] Q. 47:17.
[1210] Q. 2:26.
[1211] Q. 6:125.

12) Then, [al-Ka'bī] is asked: Is what [God] wills after belief and deprives after disbelief [i.e., reward] ease and difficulty in religion, or is there no [such ease or difficulty at all]? If [al-Ka'bī] says, "There is no such thing", his bewilderment becomes clear, and he will be no more able to make belief the basis of reward or disbelief the basis and justification for punishment. If he says, "There is such thing," he will be ruling against his own teaching that God gives what is most beneficial for someone in terms of religion.[1213] Then, [al-Ka'bī] is asked: Have you seen anyone who disbelieved after believing, or have you heard of such a thing? Or [have you seen] one who believed after disbelief? [Al-Ka'bī] should answer this question, "Yes, [I have heard it, and such reports came to me". This time, the question is asked:] Is [God's] giving of rewards and refraining from it the opening of the heart [and constriction mentioned in the verse] or not? If he answers, "No, it is not", he is forced to concede that [God] did not keep His promise and that he lied about what He reported. If he says "Yes", it is said: What is the benefit of God providing these benefits to the servant, and what is the harm in constricting [the heart]? Then, [he replies:] It is to make that a reward or a punishment, and to prevent the possibility of that from outset according to what he once called indulgence, once favoritism, once barring, and once prevention. We ask God to protect us from the doctrine which gives rise to this!

[1212] I think that the word *kidhbahu* (his falsehood), as printed in both Arabic editions, should be *kawnahu* (its being). So, I have translated the text accordingly (*Translator*). The Editor adds: this is a plausible candidate for a copyist's error in transcribing an original *wāw* and *nūn* and gains support from the word's placement at the end of the line directly under *kidhbahu* in the previous sentence in MS 157v.

[1213] This is because there is no benefit for someone who disbelieves and is punished, for example.

[6.13. Various Enquiries Related to the Will]

1) Then, some of [the Mu'tazila] quoted as evidence His statement, "They who are idolaters will say: Had God willed, we would [not have ascribed (unto Him) partners"[1214] [to prove that the term "will" when applied to God would lead to compulsion of the human agent]. Their approach may be answered in three ways:

i) [In the verse, the polytheists] mean by "will" the act of commanding, such as in His statement: "And when they do some lewdness they say: We found our fathers doing it and God has enjoined it on us."[1215] Likewise in His statement: "There is a party of them who distort the scripture with their tongues..."[1216]

ii) When [sinners] were warned and threatened with torment about [their transgression], they were given a respite [and the promised punishment did not come immediately]. Therefore, when they were given a respite, they assumed that the prophets lied and thought that God was pleased with that sin, as otherwise He would not have given them a respite. In fact, the party [of Jews who violated the limits of the] Sabbath thought so. This is similar to His statement: "Till, when the messengers despaired..."[1217]

iii) [The polytheists] may have said, ["Had God willed, we had not ascribed (unto Him) partners"[1218]] to ridicule the believers because the latter claim that everything happens by His will. In fact, [in the following verse,] this is like the saying of the human being: "When I am dead, shall I forsooth be brought forth alive?"[1219] Therefore, [the polytheists] said it to mock believers, even though this statement was true. Likewise, although the hypocrites' statement "We bear witness that you are indeed God's messenger" [is also true], they were criticized because they said it in mockery. Such is the case with [the statement of the polytheists, "Had God willed, we had not ascribed (unto Him) partners."[1220]] *God knows best*. The last part of the verse, among other things, supports this understanding: "For God's is the final argument; Had He willed He could indeed have guided all of you."[1221]

[1214] Q. 6:148.
[1215] Q. 7:28.
[1216] Q. 3:78.
[1217] Q. 12:110.
[1218] Q. 6:148.
[1219] Q. 19:66.
[1220] Q. 6:148.

[As a result, the verse "Had God willed, we had not ascribed (unto Him) partners"] cannot be interpreted in the way explained above [i.e., with God possessing a will that compels the human being.]

2) Regarding His statement Most High, "[For God's is the final argument;] had He willed He could indeed have guided all of you",[1222] [al-Kaʿbī] says: [The "will"] here means compulsion, i.e., that he coerces them as is the case with making people old and young. But He willed to put people to the test, as revealed in His saying: "If God willed, He could have punished them [(without you) but (thus it is ordained) that He may try some of you by means of others.]"[1223] As a matter of fact, [God] willed this [punishment] through the Prophet and his companions. But by this will, He meant the sense of compulsion because this will does not include praising and rewarding [the servant].

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: We have already explained what indicates [al-Kaʿbī's] delusion because he is one of those who have embraced the following doctrine: If God wills to create an action without the intermediary of human actions, He is not able to do it until the Book informs His praise and ability over that action.[1224] [Al-Kaʿbī] evaluates action as taking place in others [than God]: either that which is apparent as coming from the action of another [i.e., the result of an action performed by a human being] or that which the limits of man cannot reach [i.e., creation of an action unrelated to that of humans].[1225] Therefore, [al-Kaʿbī] is one of those who think that God is incapable of this kind of creation [such that his power] does not apply to the reality of the deeds of creatures. On the contrary, if such [deeds] are intended, their status, according to the speculation of the Muʿtazila, is that [the servants] create a creation of which the intellects cannot imagine higher, more beautiful and superior.

[1221] Q. 6:149.

[1222] Q. 6:149.

[1223] Q. 47:4.

[1224] This seems a reference to al-Kaʿbī's doctrine of concept nominalism. This explains God's properties, including His actions, in terms of His own speech. See 2.12.3 (5).

[1225] For further critique of al-Kaʿbī construal of God's actions as the creation, see 2.12.2 (6).

Here, the Mu'tazila expressed this understanding on the tongues of feeble-minded people [i.e., al-Ka'bī]. For God has explained His power over the like of that [i.e., creation of human deeds]. There is just no explanation for one who accepts that He created the heavens, the earth and what is in between, to deny that He also created [the actions of the servants].

However, with this, [God] revealed the falsity of the doctrine of the Mu'tazila that God willed, but it has not been realized, because He has no power to create the actions of His servants. In response, He said, "He is able to do all things."[1226] And, as a response to [the contention about the divine will and human actions], God Most High said: "Had willed He could indeed have guided all of you."[1227] His statement, "If God willed He could have punished them (without you)"[1228] may be interpreted as follows:

i) If He had willed to belie[1229] those whom He had warned – on the contrary, if He had willed to punish them – He would have punished them with whatever He willed; but He willed to delay.

ii) A second interpretation is that God punished them at the hands of [the believers]; but He tried the companions of his Prophet with defeat so that the truthful and sincere among them would be evident, as clarified by His statement Most High: "We tested those who were before you."[1230] And: "And among mankind is he who worships God upon a narrow margin."[1231]

3) Abū Ḥanīfa (may God have mercy on him) said: We can express the difference between us and the Qadarīs in two sentences:

We ask them: Does God know what will happen forever? If they say, "No", they are disbelievers because they consider their Lord ignorant. If they say, "Yes", the question is asked: Did God will His knowledge to be valid as He knew it or not? If they say, "No", they are adopting the notion God wills to be ignorant. Whoever wills to do so is not wise. If they say, "Yes", they are admitting that God wills everything in accordance with His knowledge of the way it will happen. This is the meaning I have expressed from the words of Abû Ḥanîfa (may God have mercy on him) as I remember it; otherwise, I have not conveyed it verbatim. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1226] Q. 11:4.

[1227] Q. 6:149.

[1228] Q. 47:4.

[1229] Reading *takdhīb* with MS. 158v and K, 302. It rhetorically makes more sense to shift from "belie" to "punish" in this sentence.

[1230] Q. 29:3.

[1231] Q. 22:11.

4) If one says: If it is bad to command sins, why should it not be bad to will sins to come into existence? The answer is given as follows: There are various reasons for this:

i) There is a contradiction in the command, but there is no contradiction in the will. This is because whereas action may be obedience to the command, it is impossible to command the sin, because sin turns into obedience with the command. Hence, since sin is commanded, the meaning of sin is abolished. However, such is not the case with the will. Is it not seen that every agent wills his action, but it cannot be said that the agent commands himself with his action? Thus, it has been proved that command and will are two different things. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) Again, God is characterized as willing in His deed, but He cannot be commanded in His deed. Therefore, it has been established that will and command do not signify each other. In addition, God Most High has willed the destruction of prophets and good people, the survival of enemies and bad people, and their living in abundance in the world, but He has not commanded this. On the contrary, He commanded us to pray for the destruction of [the second group] and the survival of [the first group]. *God alone leads to success.*

iii) Again, the benefit of the command is to emphasize the elevation and loftiness of the commander, for [the commander] makes [the commanded] his servant and reveals his right over him and the greatness of his favors, through which he is entitled to be his master and object of servitude. The right of will is free choice and to negate defeat, that is, not to be subjugated and prevented from exercising one's own sovereignty and for there not to be interference between one and his property. If will is refused, this obtains [i.e., defeat and deprivation of property]. Therefore, the claim that [God] does not will is false. A similar result arises if He is prevented from commanding and prohibiting. Therefore, on the basis of the two states [i.e., having free choice and not being deprived of property], it must be accepted that He commands and prohibits, so that His sovereignty and lordship should emerge. Also, His will must be present in all things so that His sovereignty may be realized and that it may become evident that creatures are incapable of willing in His property and dominion. *God alone leads to success.*

iv) Again, God commanded Abraham to slaughter [his son] and the sacrifice of a ram in his place. Now, it is impossible for Him to will the slaughter to be executed in reality and then prevent the slaughter with a substitute, because this is a sign of changing one's mind and a mark of ignorance. In this case, the command has not been used in the sense in which the will is realized. *Strength comes from God alone.*

The summary of the matter, as we have explained, is that the term "will" has various meanings and there is agreement on the correctness of the meaning that one is to take. There is nothing beyond this except an obstacle in the wording or a shifting from its proper meaning to one of these false meanings, according to the interlocutor. *Strength comes from God alone.*

5) The principle is that in the visible world, the action either occurs voluntarily, involuntarily or heedlessly. One whose act is not characterized by the involuntary and heedless must be characterized by the will as associated with the actions. As for that which does not actually cause [acts] to come into existence, we have already explained its varieties [such as wish, expectation etc.] *God alone leads to success.*

This is because the will in reality in the visible world is that by which the action occurs and nothing else. Therefore, according to us, will is simultaneous [with the action], but according to the Muʿtazila, it is immediately before the action without any gap. What is beyond it of that which the action may or may not occur when it is present is the well-known wish, and God is majestic above this attribute. Therefore, it has been established that His will is in the first sense and the action is realized as He has willed it. *Strength comes from God alone.*

6.14. Enquiry into the Decree and the Determination

1) In our opinion, the principle is that this enquiry [of the decree and the determination] and the enquiry into the will are both included in the createdness of the acts of servants. Therefore, if the [createdness of the acts of servants] is proven, then the [decree and the determination] will also be

proven since the createdness of actions establishes the "decree" (*qaḍā'*) of their existence and the "determination" (*qadar*) for them in their good and bad qualities. It is necessary that He is a volitional agent for [actions] and that they are creations of His. In fact, we have already made the explanation that we hope will be sufficient for one upon whom guidance was bestowed. But people have opened a separate discussion for an enquiry [i.e., the issue of the decree and determination] pertaining to them [i.e., actions]. We have followed their practice [i.e., in addressing this enquiry] because they deemed it possible that the truth appears in its own light to one who ponders which terms are used to express it. [This is] in order to let it be known that the truth is not realized by the language or the kind of explanation, but by evidence and proofs. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) Then, the literal sense of the word "*qaḍā'*" means to decide a thing and to declare it in the most appropriate and worthy way. Another meaning of [the word *qaḍā'*] is related to the creation of things, since [*qaḍā'*] is to actualize the coming into existence of things in their present mode and in a way that best suits their creation because the creator of creatures is the Wise and the Omniscient. Wisdom means to hit the mark in relation to the truth of everything and to put everything in its proper place. God Most High says: "Then He decreed them seven heavens."[1232] Accordingly, it can be said that the acts of creatures are decreed, that is, created and decided by God, as He says: "So decree what you will decree",[1233] with the meaning of judgment. That is why a knowledgeable person is called a "*qāḍī*" (judge), because he gives every right to its owner and explains that it is the owner's right. Again, [God] says: "If He decrees a thing, He says unto it only: Be! and it is."[1234] Likewise, the following statement is also correct: God decided that so-and-so should act in such-and-such manner at such-and-such time, so that such-and-such action occurs from him at such-and-such time. The right of this is that God has decided what He knows will happen, and that He has also decided the blame and praise, and reward and punishment that the agent deserves by his action.

[1232] Q. 41:12.
[1233] Q. 20:72:
[1234] Q. 3:47.

On the other hand, "*qaḍā*'" means to report and inform, as in His speech: "And We decreed for the Children of Israel [in the Scripture...]"[1235] In this sense, [*qaḍā*] may be attributed to God, which means that He informs what He knows, majestic is His praise, and there is no contradiction in this.

"*Qaḍā*'" also means to command, such as in His statement Most High: "Your Lord has decreed, that you worship none save Him."[1236] And He states: "And it becomes not a believing man or a believing woman, when God and His messenger have decided an affair (for them), [that they should (after that) claim any say in their affair]."[1237] This meaning of the word may be used about God only in relation to good [because He commands only what is good].

"*Qaḍā*'" can also mean to finish a work [and to be free from a job], as in His statement: "Then, when Moses had finished the term."[1238] However, it is impermissible to use the word for God in this sense, since it requires God to be busy with a thing or to be free from it. However, the word may be metaphorically attributed to God in the sense of "completing" that which He created. *Strength comes from God alone*. Other senses of the *qaḍā*' have also been mentioned, but we need not quote them in this context.

3) As for the "determination" (*qadar*), it is used in two senses:

i) It is the measure (*ḥadd*) in accordance with which a thing appears. In this sense, the word denotes the creation of something as it is in its good or evil, beauty or ugliness, wisdom or folly. This is the interpretation of wisdom as God creates everything as it is and hits the mark of what is most suitable in everything. In this manner, He says: "We have created everything by measure."[1239]

ii) The second sense of *qadar* is to determine the time, place, truth, and falsity of everything as well as to its reward and punishment. The fact that when Gabriel, upon him be peace, asked the Messenger of God about belief, he attached the sense we have mentioned to *qadar*, "Its good and evil come from God", demonstrates that it connotes one of these two senses.

[1235] Q. 17:4.
[1236] Q. 17:23.
[1237] Q. 33:36.
[1238] Q. 28:29.
[1239] Q. 54:49.

Then, the first sense of *qadar*, that is, creating something as it is, is present in the acts of creatures. For they appear with beauty and ugliness that their imaginations cannot reach and their intellects cannot appreciate. Thus, it has been established that [actions] have occurred in such way [i.e., as beautiful or ugly] through God, exalted is He. When we look at the second sense of *qadar*, it is impossible for people to determine the time and place of their actions, and their knowledge is not enough to attain this. Therefore, in this aspect also, it is impossible for their actions to be brought about by them, and they are not apart from Him. In fact, God Most High has said: "[We set, between them and the towns which We had blessed, towns easy to be seen,] and We determined the journey."[1240] And He said: "Except his wife, of whom We had determined that she should be of those who stay behind."[1241] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[6.15. A Critique of al-Kaʿbī's Doctrine of the Decree and the Determination]

1) Al-Kaʿbī claimed that God would not decree disbelief, then he expounded on the meanings of *qaḍā'* and limited it within the semantic scope he set. It is an error for [al-Kaʿbī] to deny the sense of the decree, based on the possibility that *qaḍā'* in its entirety may have one of the [other] senses he enumerated. Then, he brought as evidence [for his view] the fact that disbelief is inconsistent and false, whereas God's *qaḍā'* is consistently just and true. Likewise, the *qaḍā'* of arbiters for the actions of injustice and wrongdoing are not false nor inconsistent, such that even children know it. So, whoever is ignorant of that then claims to draw the boundaries of theology, first has a duty to learn what theology is. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[Al-Kaʿbī] argues using what is reported from the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace that he said: God, majestic is He,[1242] said: "Whoever is not pleased with My decree and is not patient with My trial, let him take a lord other than Me."[1243]

[1240] Q. 34:18.

[1241] Q. 15:60.

[1242] Reading MS. 160v as *jallahu*.

[1243] See al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-awsaṭ*, 8:135, no. 7269; 9:169, no. 8366, with the following version: "*man lam yarḍa bi-qaḍā' allāh wa-lam yu'min bi-qadar allāh fa-l-yal-*

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: [The answer to] this is as we have said above. To be pleased with His decree is to know that disbelief is something bad that will disappear, that it is evil and corruption, and that if its agent does not repent, it will cause him to incur divine wrath and torment. One who is displeased with it is a disbeliever and falls into the situation as described by [the above-mentioned prophetic] saying. Disbelief and evil are deeds of the servant, and it is impossible for [the act of the servant] to be His decree. So, it has been established that God's decree is the basis for the reality of the action, as I have mentioned. *Strength comes from God alone.*

The meaning of [the above-mentioned prophetic] saying is related to diseases and calamities. Is it not seen that, according to the Muʿtazila, eternal punishment in Hell is a decree of God? The same is the case with being forsaken and being led astray, etc. So, let al-Kaʿbī be pleased with these in relation to himself; otherwise, he should seek a lord other than Him! The Muʿtazila say: It is unthinkable for God to inflict disease and calamity on those who are not guilty or sinful without compensating for it. In that case, [the Muʿtazila] would not be pleased with [the diseases and calamities] that befell them unless they were compensated for. This is the meaning of what was reported: "Let him take a lord other than Me."

2) [Al-Kaʿbī] said, "We must be pleased with God's decree". The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: We have explained how [al-Kaʿbī] is pleased with [His decree] and his situation in that regard too. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[Al-Kaʿbī] says about His statement, "We have created everything by measure":[1244] "The determination is a thing that must happen, and disbelief is a thing that need not happen. The belief in a determination from Him comes from the aspect that we have mentioned, and from that aspect of what must happen. Thereupon, it is required that His determination [i.e., of disbelief] is ugly and unpleasant."

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tamisa ilāhan ghayr allāh". See also al-Haythamī, *Bughyat al-rāʾid fī taḥqīq majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, 7:421; al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr sharḥ al-jāmiʿ al-ṣaghīr*, 6:224, no. 9026. The argument al-Kaʿbī is trying to make is that God's decree is only for what is good and true, such as belief.

[1244] Q. 54:49.

Then, [al-Ka'bī] said: If one asks you, "Did God decree and determine disbelief?", you must ask him to tell you what he means.

Abû Manṣûr (may God have mercy on him) said: If such thing is necessary, all the answers you gave before you asked him to tell you are heedlessness. *Strength comes from God alone.*

3) The essential principle about the decree, determination, creation and will is that no one has an excuse in relation to them for three reasons:

i) God Most High decrees, creates and [does other things] that have been mentioned [such as willing and determining], because He knows that those things will be chosen and preferred. By His willing, creating and decreeing, people attain and achieve what they prefer. So, people have no argument [against the decree] because what they choose is the most preferable and best thing in their sight, even if they have not come to this conclusion through knowledge, the Book and reports.[1245] This is because the [actions] that come from them are their own choice and preference. *Help may be asked from God alone.*

ii) No existing things have brought, pushed or compelled people to their actions. On the contrary, people are in [the state of free choice] that they would be in had none of [those things] existed and their [i.e., the people's] existence[1246] was imagined without them. Likewise, people could have done the opposite of what they did because [God] did not compel people and did not divert them from a reality in which each of them knows that he is a voluntary agent, and that he might not have committed his actions. Thus, [the actions of people have been created] just like the rest of the substances, accidents, times and places in which these actions occur. If none of these [i.e., substance, accident, time, and place] constitute an excuse or argument for people, then neither does [the decree and determination]. *God alone leads to success.*

iii) None of these [i.e., the decree, determination, creation, etc.] come to people's minds, and people do not think at the time of action that they are acting because of them. So, it is false to rely [in the context of the claim that one is not responsible for his own action] on something that has no effect on [the generation of] one's action even according to the opponent. Likewise, it is false and useless to cite as a pretext something that has nothing to do with the action committed by the agent. If they could bring [the decree and determination] as evidence, they could also bring as evidence, being informed, knowing, being supported, etc. Again, if [the decree and determination] constituted an excuse, then not knowing commands and prohibitions, promises and threats; not knowing the place at which their sins take place; and the fact that their sins do not harm God, weaken His sovereignty nor decrease His dominion would be an excuse. If they had an excuse because of [the decree and determination], it would be an excuse for them that God knowingly created the actions that would emerge from them. If [the decree and determination] were an argument for people [in their effort to avoid responsibility for their actions], things that are clearer than all these would also be an argument. They are the things – such as His graciousness, generosity, not needing to punish them, Him being pardoning, forgiving, and that He receives no benefit from their obedience nor harm from their sin – that may, just like [the decree and determination], come to one's imagination at the time of an action. Since none of these can be provided as an argument, [the decree and determination] cannot be brought forward either.

[1245] Reading MS. 161r as *al-akhbār*.

[1246] Reading MS. 161v as *kawnuhum* with K, 309.

If it is said: Why should this not [i.e., the evidence that human beings are responsible for their actions] imply that the things you have mentioned [i.e., the decree, determination, creation, etc.] are not from God? We answer as follows: [The reason why it will not imply this] is the very evidence that we have presented to prove that all the things we have explained [i.e., the decree, determination, creation, etc.] are from God. *Strength comes from God alone.*

4) The principle in this matter is as follows: Everyone knows that he is an agent with the ability to act, that he has a choice to do otherwise, that if he were prevented from it, that would be very grave and severe for him, and that he chose the opposite of [that other option]. Therefore, it is impossible to deny its reality [i.e., that the human being is the agent] because everyone knows this for himself. Again, this [i.e., the fact that the human being is a freely choosing agent] is like the sensation and senses that he cannot conceive of himself as being mistaken about.

On the other hand, everyone finds his action emerging other than his intellect determined according to its beauty and ugliness, and other than his knowledge could predict in terms of its place and time; he faces tiredness and pain in himself that he did not intend, and he is unable to use his power for a similar action, though there is no deficiency in his power. Therefore, it has been established that people's actions in these aspects that are almost [as apparent] as sensation do not belong to them. So, the attitude of one who wants to attribute actions to people in these aspects and to negate them from the aspects explained before [i.e., in terms of the free choice], is arrogant with respect to his own mind and stubborn with respect to his own senses. *Strength comes from God alone.*

5) Then, we agree with the Muʿtazila that God Most High is only to be attributed with that from among creatures or actions that does not suggest evil in terms of [His] names. As for whatever does [suggest evil], it must be negated from Him. Some points may be derived from this [general principle]:

i) The first issue is related to the aspect of attributing good deeds to God by saying, "They are from God." The Muʿtazila said: [Good deeds] are attributed to God in the sense that He commands them, calls unto them and makes people capable of them. We say: This is a possible attribution and though it is beautiful, it is not what is meant by attribution to Him in the context of [beautiful] acts. Rather, what is meant by the mention of actions is gratitude and praise for Him. Though the first [i.e., the view of the Muʿtazila] may be permissible, this is better because God commands both believers and disbelievers to do good deeds, calls on both to do them, and makes both capable of them. On the other hand, only believers give thanks and praise to God, while disbelievers do not. The following unrestricted statement clarifies this: belief is one of God's blessings and bounties, and He has bestowed suchlike on the believer. If it were not for the grace of God, one would not be purified, and a great punishment would have afflicted him. From this aspect, [goodness] cannot be attributed to God in relation to the disbeliever. Yet when actions are not mentioned, good deeds are like commands [which address both the believer and the disbeliever]. *God alone leads to success.*

That is why God has condemned those who say that the distorted scripture is from God [i.e., Jews at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad][1247] and those who attribute [to God] the *baḥīra* [a camel that was set aside for veneration by the pre-Islamic Arabians], etc.[1248] These people claimed that [God] commanded these things. But God has freed Himself from that and stated that they are the work of Satan and that they say them due to jealousy in themselves. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) Nor is [the attribution] of action [to God] in respect of [His] commanding permissible because that implies necessity, which involves great difficulty. Therefore, the action is attributed to God not in respect of [commanding], but in respect of praise and gratitude, as God says: "but God confers a favor on you"[1249] and, "If it had not been for the grace of God and His mercy [you would have been among the losers]."[1250]

iii) Al-Ka'bī said: Only the good and beautiful may be attributed to God. Then, he claimed that the ascription of obedience to Him is with respect to [His] command. Now what beauty is there in this? We have explained the problem with this approach [i.e., that command involves necessity, which in turn involves difficulty]. Again, [al-Ka'bī] claimed that evils cannot be attributed to Him because He forbade [evil deeds], which cannot be attributed to Him.

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: Likewise, according to us, [evil] cannot be attributed to Him because the aspect of attribution is gratitude [from servants to Him]. There is no aspect [from which to be thankful for the evil perpetrated by the servants].

Then, [al-Ka'bī] said: The believers aimed to oppose the Zindiqs' statement, ["Only good is from God"] with the statement, "Both good and evil are from God." As for the actions of the servants, they did not think of them.[1251] On the contrary, God said, "[It is] one of the works of Satan"[1252] [i.e., in the context that evil is not from Himself, but from Satan].

[1247] See Q. 2:79.

[1248] See Q. 5:103.

[1249] Q. 49:17.

[1250] Q. 2:64.

[1251] In other words, al-Ka'bī excuses the believers' use of the statement, "Both good and evil are from God", which goes against his doctrine, by claiming that they were not thinking about the actions of the servants.

[1252] Q. 5:90.

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: The statement ["Both good and evil are from God"], which is mentioned as the doctrine of the Muslims, is a lie. On the contrary, Muslims say, "The determination of good and evil is from God" and the determination of evil is not evil. Had there been this statement about the Zindiqs, then there would have been the ugliness of the attribution of evil to God, the Wise, the Omniscient. On the contrary, one whose action is evil, is himself evil, and one whose action is corrupting is himself a corrupter. Regarding [al-Ka'bi's] statement, "[As for the actions of the servants], they did not think of them", this is a lie. Rather, they did not think of the specifics of what he mentioned.[1253] *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, [al-Ka'bī] said: If it is said, "We do not say that disbelief is from God with respect to the command, but rather we say it is from Him with respect to the creation", he said: "The command comes under action [i.e., a person's disbelief is included within their own creation of their action]."

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: We state [that] we do not say, "Unbelief is from God in one respect" nor, "Evil is from God absolutely". Likewise, no one says, "It is from God." Again, no one will say, "Iblīs is from God", or "Satan is from God", or "All dirt and stench is from God", or "All corruption is from God." It has been established that this phrase [i.e., "It is from God"] should not be used in contexts where the use of the phrase ["God has created"] is also incorrect [i.e., just as we ought not to single out the statement, "God has created dirt and stench", we do not say, "Dirt and stench are from God"]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

The essential principle in this matter is that the expression, "It is from God" means the same as saying that He commands or He attributes with blessings, whereas in that [i.e., in negative expressions, such as, "Dirt and stench are from God"], these two meanings do not exist. Therefore, it is impermissible to attribute [such bad things] to Him. This is as if we say: Even though God is really the lord and deity of everything, the creator of everything and it all belongs to Him, this ought not be said about filthy things, evil objects and Satan etc., which are only mentioned to show contempt. Therefore, when these are attributed to one, it is intended [to show contempt for him], even though they are created like other things that are attributed to Him. Thus, the same applies to the subject we are discussing [i.e., disbelief and evil].[1254] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1253] They did not think of the specific application of God's determination of good and evil to the actions of the servant, though that is included in its generality.

6) So, it is repellant to say that disbelief and sins are by God's decree, determination and will in two respects:

i) Disbelief and sins are ugly, or disbelief and sins are mentioned only to denigrate and humiliate. As I have already conveyed, it is impossible to attribute a thing of this nature to God Most High, even if it is the reality of doctrine.[1255]

ii) With the expression ["Disbelief and sins are by God's decree, determination and will"], one tries to justify [his attempt to get rid of the responsibility of his actions]: that is what is understood from [this expression]. However, we have shown that sinners have no excuse in them [i.e., in the decree, determination, will, and creation]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Nor are people used to saying, "O Creator of filthy and unclean things!" etc., although God is in fact the creator of everything. The same is true of what we have mentioned [i.e., about disbelief and sins]. The principle of this is the following: things that mean praising, thanking, mentioning His blessings and commands are attributed to God Most High. Although things other than these are actually His creation, they are not attributed to Him. *Strength comes from God alone.*

The summary of this is as follows: God is described by His action, and, in reality, it emerges with the meaning of justice and grace. In fact, sometimes that which is not His action and attribute [because it belongs to the human beings] can be attributed to Him. Thus, if it requires a praiseworthy meaning, its attribution to Him is permissible because it has been obtained through His benevolence and grace. If it does not [require a praiseworthy meaning], it is not ascribed to Him because it is not really His act, such that He is described by it. [God] is wise and just in respect of His action, but that thing [i.e., that is not praiseworthy] does not have this quality in the sight of people. God Most High is majestic and exalted above other than these two qualities. For His actions involve the attribute of justice and wisdom or that of grace and beneficence. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1254] As this final sentence shows, along with al-Māturīdī's overall treatment, all of this refers to the proper way to speak about God and attribute things to Him. In reality, everything is equally created by Him.

[1255] One must maintain correct comportment with God even if there is no disagreement about the doctrinal reality.

7) The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: The Qadarīs [i.e., the Mu'tazila] said the following about the attribution to God of acts such as misguiding (*iḍlāl* and *izāgha*), and turning away the hearts, which is in His statement, "God turned away their hearts"[1256] and other verses: they are attributed to God in the sense that He tests people and grants freedom. The attribution of good deeds to Him is in the sense that He commands them and supports people to do them.

[We respond:] Were it as [the Mu'tazila] hold, then He is ascribed with bringing from light to darkness [at the same time] as He is ascribed with bringing from darkness to light in the sense of commanding and supporting. This is because the cause of the ascription of good to Him is commanding, supporting and mentioning guidance. Rather, every mention [of guidance in the Qur'an] counters what is mentioned [by the Mu'tazila] because commanding and supporting are both for testing and include giving freedom. Since this [i.e., our definition] is sound, and the other [i.e., the Mu'tazila's definition] is unsound, it becomes clear that this includes a meaning that the other does not.[1257] Moreover, the Qadarīs claim that the evil [perpetrated by the human beings] cannot be attributed to Him because He has forbidden them. Yet He has also forbidden straying, being tempted and deviating. So, why have they been attributed to Him? [i.e., in the sense of testing and granting freedom]. *God alone leads to success.*

[The Mu'tazila] claimed that "misguiding" [as attributed to God refers to] naming [the servant "misguided"], which is an incorrect claim because:

[1256] Q. 9:127.

[1257] Bringing from light to darkness is "misguiding", but this on the Mu'tazilī reading is just His testing and granting them the freedom to pass the test. On the other hand, bringing from darkness to light is commanding and supporting to do good deeds. But al-Māturīdī argues that God's commanding and supporting comes together with His granting human beings freedom for the sake of testing. This would mean that, according to the Mu'tazilī definition, God simultaneously brings the same person from light to darkness and darkness to light, which is unsound.

i) [The name "misguided"] is found in other than [the servant], but [the act of misguiding] has not been attributed to [God].

ii) Naming one "misguided" involves no wisdom which is worthy of note in terms of being characterized by independence and sovereignty, as is mentioned in His statement: "God misleads whomever He wills and guides whomever He wills."[1258] [The act of "misguiding" in the verse] occurs in the context of power and sovereignty. *We ask God alone for help.*

The principle for us in all this matter is that God is described by His action. The meaning of His action is to create everything in the most suitable way for it, whether gracious in His action or just. The characterization of His action is never free of these two, and its reality is never free of the former [i.e., grace]. Therefore, whichever of these two aspects [i.e., graciousness and justice] His action is realized for Him, it affirms the meaning of [His] creating. Although [the argument of naming] has been brought up in the context of misguiding, the sealing of one's heart and similar [divine] acts, none of the Muʿtazila's misrepresentations are possible. This is so because that [i.e., creating everything in the most suitable way in terms of grace and justice] is the meaning of His action. *God alone leads to success.*

6.16. Enquiry: [Identification of the Muʿtazila with the Qadarīs]

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: The People of Rational Theology have agreed on the condemnation of the appellation of the "Qadarīs", and they all declared themselves free of them. A saying has been narrated about that from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, which makes it possible to pass into knowledge about who possesses the reality of this name. It is his saying: "The Qadarīs are the Zoroastrians of this community." As is known, [the Prophet] intended by it a condemnation of the followers of the Qadarīs due to the meaning of a doctrine which they share with the Zoroastrians who themselves differ on it from the people of other religions. Therefore, in order to reveal the reality of the followers of [the Qadarīs], it is necessary to think deeply about [the Zoroastrian doctrine in question]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1258] Q. 6:39.

The basis that the Zoroastrians are condemned and opposed to the people of other religions has several aspects:

1) [The Zoroastrians] say: God was one, and had no partner, then a vile thought arose from Him. This was either because He had seen himself, or because He thought that there would be an enemy to fight Him. At that moment, Iblīs emerged from that vile thought, and Iblīs created the evil of the world, as God created its good. Yet God had no power to create any part of evil and corruption, and Iblīs had no power to create any part of goodness and benefit. Thus, the world came into existence through [God and Iblīs]. With all this, [the Zoroastrians] differed from the members of religions. It is known that all of these [i.e., the emergence of the vile thought from God, the generation of Iblīs from it, God's inability to create evil, His cooperation with Iblīs in the creation of the world] are the qualities of condemnation and disgrace. Then, the Muʿtazila have a share of all these qualities. That is why the Muʿtazila were given the appellation "Qadarīs". *Strength comes from God alone.*

The explanation of the issue is as follows: The Muʿtazila claimed that God Most High existed with nothing else, then the will came into existence without a will from God to generate it or a free choice from Him for it. This means [nothing] other than the whole world came into existence through [the will] because the Muʿtazila adopts the following doctrine: the world is the action of God and it came into existence through a free choice, which is the same as will, as is clear in His statement: "Your Lord is doer of what He wills."[1259] Thus, the Muʿtazila called this generated thing "will", while the Zoroastrians named it "thought". But they are the same thing, their difference lying in the name, and not in the reality. Then, the Zoroastrians said that half the world was created by that thought, while the Muʿtazila said that the whole world was created by it. Thus, the Muʿtazila and the Zoroastrians are agreed on a condemnable statement, while the Muʿtazila added to it.[1260]

[1259] Q. 11:107. In other words, the first thing that is originated is the will, and from it follows the rest of the world.

[1260] See the polemical questions directed by Mardāndarrox son of Ohrmazddād (third/ninth or fourth/tenth century) to the Muʿtazila, which focus on God's will. Sahner, *The Definitive Zoroastrian Critique of Islam*, 156-58.

2) Then, the Muʿtazila said that the world came into being through God and bodies. But, according to them, the agent of states such as joining, separation, motion, stillness, and all things arising directly or indirectly[1261] from creatures, is not God. Likewise, according to the Zoroastrians, all the world is from good and evil. On the contrary, the Zoroastrians attribute many substances to Iblīs, while the Muʿtazila cannot in a real sense attribute any [substance] to God. The Zoroastrians attribute to Iblīs the power to create evil in place of God, negating evil from Him. This is the doctrine of the Muʿtazila on the power of human actions, too. *Strength comes from God alone.*

The Zoroastrians do not attribute any power to Iblīs over the part of the world that belongs to God, nor do they attribute any power to God over the part of the world that belongs to Iblīs. This is also the attitude of the Muʿtazila. However, while [the Muʿtazila] attribute [this power] to all living beings, the Zoroastrians attribute it to Iblīs specifically. The Zoroastrians say that God has no will and sovereignty over things that are not commanded, an opinion to which the Muʿtazila agree. The reason that leads the Zoroastrians to adopt dualism is that they consider attributing the creation of evil and the corruption of things to God as bad. The Muʿtazila are of the same opinion. If the [Muʿtazila] truly knew that [divine wisdom] means putting everything in its proper place and that [God] is exalted above acting for His own benefit or some good for Himself, they would know that God's description as creating everything in its present manner is His description by power and majesty. Professing this is to accept the perfection of His dominion and greatness. *Strength comes from God alone.*

3) Another explanation is that what shows that the Muʿtazila are the worthiest of being known by this name among the followers [of the Qadarīs] is that God has made people say [that the Muʿtazila are the Qadarīs] whether they are young or old, and whether or not they know that to which the name refers. Therefore, it has been proven that [the Qadarīs] becoming a nickname for [the Muʿtazila] is not due to the influence of people, but to the grace of God. This is so that people would know the blameworthy in religion and avoid mixing with them. The Muʿtazila have two distinct signs [that show they are the Qadarīs]:

[1261] Lit. "connected or separated" (*mafṣūl aw bāʾin*).

i) Whether they are physically beautiful or ugly, they all have a cold pallor on their faces that the eye detests. If this pallor were to be compared with the faces of the Zoroastrians, it would be observed to be the same.

ii) The Mu'tazila hang out in the wine shops of the Zoroastrians, and most of [the Mu'tazila] do not see the Abode of Islam as their home. *Strength comes from God alone.*

4) There are two other reasons why this name [i.e., Qadarīs] has been attributed to the Mu'tazila:

i) Every religion and sect is associated with the meaning it claims for itself: Islam [i.e., to surrender oneself to God], Judaism [i.e., the land of Judah], Christianity [lit. "Nazarenes" i.e., the land of Nazareth],[1262] etc. This is also the case with the Mu'tazila: they see the determination of their actions as their own, while others see it as from [God]. It is impossible for those who see [determination of their actions] as belonging to another, to be recognized as [Qadarīs], while [this name] cannot be negated from those who claim that the reality of determination belongs to them. Similar to [our explanation], it came as a condition of belief in the following saying of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace: "[and] belief [that] ... the determination [of fate], its good and evil, come from God."[1263]

ii) It is a well-known matter that no Mu'tazilī we have seen has been able to stay away from committing major sins due to being carried away by their lusts, by which they erase the name of Islam and the ornament that adorns it. This shows that they underrate the religion of God and choose to leave it in exchange for the slightest desire they may give to their lower souls. They are the worthiest of being ascribed to anything other than the religion of God because this is their attitude towards their religion, which they claim to be the religion of God. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1262] See Harvey, *The Qur'an and the Just Society*, 101.

[1263] A reference to part of the Hadith of Gabriel. For the hadith references, see under 7.2 (4) xvi.

[6.17. A Critique of al-Kaʿbī on the Relationship Between the Qadarīs and the Muʿtazila]

1) Then, al-Kaʿbī said: If a person is fond of something, mentioning it a lot and exceeding the limits in doing so, it is the custom of the Arabs to name him by that thing and associate him with it. They [i.e., his opponents from the People of Monotheism] did this and even said, "This is the determination of God" in relation to every obscene and condemnable thing.[1264]

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: [al-Kaʿbī] has erred in various aspects of this claim:

i) One of them is [the custom] he has narrated from the Arabs.

ii) Secondly, they [i.e., the People of Monotheism] do not say what [al-Kaʿbī] has narrated from them. Even if they did say this, it is said by the common people, and not the people by which the names of the sects are known. As for the elect, they do not mention such a thing. On the contrary, they dislike mentioning that [i.e., the phrase, "This is His determination" about bad and ugly things] because they are afraid it will be presented as an excuse in the context where there is in fact no excuse. Even if the Arabs named the people by the things that al-Kaʿbī said, they did not do this to express that they were really such, but only to give them nicknames. However, our discussion is about the people who are truly [Qadarī] because this [title] came from the Messenger of God and he denigrated its owners. *Strength comes from God alone.* Again, this condemnation came from the Messenger of God and at that time there was no one known for this deed [i.e., Qadarism], and there was no sect for which the Arabs had coined the name. Therefore, it is impossible for the name [Qadarī] to be employed for this reason [i.e., the Arabs naming a person or a group because of what they often mention]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) Then, al-Kaʿbī asked a question on our behalf, indicating his own bewilderment, and said: "Are you [the Muʿtazila] associated with [the Qadarīs] because you have said: There is no determination?" Then, in response, he said that a thing could not be associated with one who negated

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[1264] Al-Kaʿbī is here trying to reverse the application of the name Qadarī to those, such as al-Māturīdī, who accept that God has determined evil actions.

it. The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: What [al-Kaʿbī] has said is true, but [the name Qadarī] is attributed to one who claims and affirms [determination of deeds] belongs to himself.[1265] This is due to him saying that actions occur according to a power that [the servant] determined for them.

Then, [al-Kaʿbī] said: If it was said to us: "You affirm [determination] by stating: We are determining our deeds," one says: There follows no such result for two reasons:

i) The active participle (*al-ism al-fāʿil*) of [the verb *qaddara*] is "*muqaddir*" [and not *qadarī*].

ii) There is no obstacle for one to say: "One determines (*yuqaddiru*) his prayer, clothing, home and the matter of his travel." Otherwise, everyone who does so is a Qadarī.

Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said:

As for the first justification, "*qaddara*" and "*qadara*" mean the same thing [i.e., to determine]. Also, the verb for the names Naṣrānī (Christian) and Yahūdī (Jew) are in the form of *al-tanaṣṣur* (to be or become a Christian) and *al-tahawwud* (to be or become a Jew). Yet, the name is as it is seen [i.e., they are Naṣrānī and Yahūdī, and not *mutanaṣṣir* and *mutahawwid*]. Therefore, the same is true for "*qadar*".

Secondly, God Most High may be named by it [i.e., so as to be called "Determiner" (*muqaddir*)], but He is not named Qadarī. Therefore, the following has been established: [Giving the name Qadarī] either depends on a specific thing or upon a meaning that exists in the one to whom [this name] is given. If it depends upon a specific thing, that thing lies in the realm of religion, and one who attributes that thing [i.e., "determination"] to himself [and says, "My determination is in my hands"] is more worthy to be named by it [i.e., as a Qadarī]. If [giving the name "Qadarī" to the Muʿtazila] is with regard to the meaning, according to this explanation, [the People of Monotheism] believe that the emergence of the action occurs according to the determination of God, not the determination of the servant. However, the Mu'tazila claim that the action occurs according to their own determination. *God alone leads to success.*

[1265] Al-Māturīdī agrees that there should be a positive basis for the name Qadarī to be applied but argues there is one due to their affirmation of the determination of actions to themselves.

If we rely on al-Ka'bī's report on the Arabs' [tradition of giving nicknames about that which they discuss], the name of the Mu'tazila should be the "Determinists" (*al-jabriyya*), because they keep harping on about the word "compulsion" (*jabr*). *Strength comes from God alone.* When [the name "Qadari"] is attributed to the Zoroastrians, this is not because they frequently use the term ["determination"], but because it expresses the reality of their teaching. *Strength comes from God alone.*

3) Then, [al-Ka'bī] is asked the reason why the Ḥashwīs[1266] named [the Mu'tazila] as Qadarīs. [Al-Ka'bī] claims that this was [the Ḥashwīs'] mistake, just as they erred in most religious issues. [He goes on to claim as follows:] The Ḥashwīs joined the Marwanids [i.e., the Umayyad dynasty] and [such determinism] was their teaching by which they aimed to

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[1266] Ḥashwī was often used as a derogatory term by rationally inclined scholars for those accused of anthropomorphism due to their affirmation of certain scriptural statements about God. This could apply to the People of Hadith (*ahl al-ḥadīth*), though it is typically directed towards the "vulgar" masses. See Ovadia, *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya and the Divine Attributes*, 43-44. Al-Māturīdī does not use the term when discussing the question of whether God has a body, as his focus is on the Karrāmīs (see 2.6-2.7). He brings up the term Ḥashwī in the present context, in which it is used by al-Ka'bī to refer to early Determinists, i.e., anti-Qadarīs who supported the Marwanids. He does not criticize the Ḥashwīs explicitly here, because his focus is on calling al-Ka'bī a liar. Nevertheless, an inference can be drawn that, on grounds of their determinist tendencies, he considers them to be the group intended by the name Murji'a in the prophetic hadith that he quotes. This meaning for the Murji'a is confirmed by 8.3 (4) i. Later in *The Book of Monotheism*, al-Māturīdī counters the suggestion that his own group should be called Murji'ī for not including all good deeds within belief by suggesting that it is the Ḥashwīs who discard the realities of actions (see 8.3 (1) i a). Again, it is the Ḥashwīs who practice an illegitimate "deferral" by stating, "I am a believer, God willing" (see 8.3 (1) ii b). A third doctrine that al-Māturīdī disputes with the Ḥashwīs is the createdness of belief (see 8.4 (1)). From all this, the term emerges as his way of distinguishing his own group of Samarqandī Ḥanafīs, or as he prefers the People of Monotheism, from the People of Hadith, i.e., Sunnī Traditionalists. The polemics over "blameworthy" deferral (*irjā'*) are of central importance precisely because he supports the legacy of "praiseworthy" deferral inaugurated by Abū Ḥanīfa (see 8.3 (3); Abū Ḥanīfa, *Risālat Abī Ḥanīfa ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī*, 40), and developed by those he sees as correctly applying suspension of judgment (*waqf*), see the Editor's Introduction. His implicit strategy in the present section is to use the prophetic hadith condemning the Qadarīs and Murji'a to refer to the polemic between the Mu'tazila and the Ḥashwīs, thus leaving his own group as the balanced middle course.

exonerate themselves by attributing [their] condemnable deeds to God's decree and determination. Hence, [the Ḥashwis] supported [the Marwanids] in their [doctrine], and by ascribing bad deeds to God, they sought to free them of sins they had committed. However, [the Ḥashwīs] saw that this spread widely among [the Marwanids]. For example, the act of Mu´āwiya to ʿAmmār [b. Yasâr], when he killed him and said, "ʿAlī [killed] ʿAmmār when he brought him here."[1267] In addition, [the Marwanids] claimed that "the one who had the greater share [in sin]" was ʿAlī [i.e., in slandering ʿĀʾisha].[1268] [Al-Kaʿbī] exaggerated the Muʿtazila's remarks regarding [the Marwanids] until he stripped them of the requirements of the imamate, and even claimed that [the Muʿtazila] received the name [Qadarīs] from [the Ḥashwīs]. He spoke at length on this subject, with most of his words being lies.

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: [Al-Kaʿbī's] attribution of the naming [of the Muʿtazila as Qadarīs] to the Ḥashwīs is a fabrication by which he intends to show that they are responsible for naming them. However, this attribution is a transmitted tradition in the entirety of the community, and relies on the following report from the Prophet, upon him be peace: "My intercession [with God] does not reach two groups of people from my community: the Qadarīs and the Murjiʾa."[1269] The Qadarīs are explained by their negation of determination from God.[1270]

The principle in this is as follows: The Murjiʾa defer the reality of the creatures' actions to God,[1271] whereas the Qadarīs are those that negate the governance of [their actions] from Him and attribute all governance over them to the creatures [i.e., the human beings themselves]. So much so that, [according to them], the generation and completion of the world takes place according to the governance of the creatures. It is they who destroy and preserve, and by it is established God's governance of the resurrection and the people of Paradise and Hell. The only role for God in these matters is to inform. Likewise, no actions are realized for Him in the world except the existence of the world after it did not exist.

[1267] Also see under 5.5 (2).

[1268] This is an allusion to Q. 24:11: "As for him among them who had the greater share [of sin] therein, his will be an awful doom."

[1269] For the hadith, see al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr*, 4:208. Also see al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan, al-Qadar*, 13; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan, al-Muqaddima*, 9.

[1270] It appears that possibly something was omitted here in the text as only the Qadarīs are explained before turning to the principle at hand.

[1271] By entirely deferring the result of the servants' actions to God, the Murjiʾa remove human responsibility for them, just as the Qadarīs remove divine responsibility.

The just view is the middle teaching between [the Qadarīs and the Murji'a], which is the meaning of God's statement, Mighty and Majestic: "Thus, we have made you a middle nation..."[1272] Also the words of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace: "The best of matters is their middle."[1273] In addition, [al-Kaʿbī] attributed mistakes [in religion] to the Ḥashwīs but no one is safe from [mistakes]. That which he mentioned [i.e., believing in determinism] was only said by a group of them. As for the Muʿtazila, they participated with the atheists in [believing they had a role in] the origination of the world and bringing it into existence out of nothing.[1274] What [al-Kaʿbī] mentions of the reason [for the Muʿtazila being named Qadarīs], what he transmits about the Marwanids, what he narrates about those who exonerated sinners, and his interpretation of that to necessitate determination belonging to the servants, it is all lies. We seek refuge in God from the perplexity in religion that leads to slandering the Muslims.

[6.18. Further Debates over the Relationship Between the Muʿtazila and the Qadarīs]

1) Then, the Qadarīs brought the following verses from God's Book as evidence to prove that power precedes the act: "Take them [i.e., the tablets of the Torah] with power."[1275] The People of Interpretation said this means: "Act upon them with diligence and effort." So, it is as if they have understood "power" here in the sense of means. However, the apparent meaning understood from [the verse] is, "Take them with a power that is present at the time of taking" because if [the power] does not exist at the time of taking, the act of taking occurs without power. So, the correctness of our view [i.e.,

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[1272] Q. 2:143.

[1273] Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, 3/273.

[1274] This is a key point in al-Māturīdī's critique of them on the question of human action. Only God truly creates by bringing things into existence. See 6.3.1.

[1275] Q. 7:145.

the power is together with the act, and not before it] has been established. In fact, one says to another: "Take it with both hands and look at it with your vision." This is done upon meeting [in person].[1276] The following words of [God] to Moses are understood along the same lines: "Take them with power, and command your people to take the best of them."[1277] To prove [their doctrine that power precedes the act, the Mu'tazila] also cite the statement of the jinn: "I am verily strong and trustworthy for such [work]"[1278] and the woman's statement [i.e., the statement of Shu'ayb's daughter to her father]: "The best man you can hire is the strong, the trustworthy."[1279]

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said:

i) These two verses have nothing to do with [our subject] because [Shu'ayb's daughter] became aware of the power of Moses while he was drawing [water], and this power did not last until that time [i.e., until the time when she spoke to her father]. Likewise, the power of the jinn is that in which he has tested himself before [and so he knows what he can do]. *God alone leads to success.*

ii) According to a second interpretation, [the "strength" in the verses] refers to that which in the normal course of events is generated by the will at the time that one seeks to act. [This power] is generated each time for whatever it will be used. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[The Mu'tazila] also cited the term "ability" (*istiṭā'a*) in the Qur'an as evidence. However, we have already explained what this term means [in the previous discussions]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) Then, the well-known Determinists according to us are those who carry the nickname of determinism (*jabr*). They treat [human] power over the action as impossible – thereby making God a liar – and attribute all actions to God, not recognizing any actions for His servants in reality.

The following has been said: Does God say to [His servants]: "Why did you do this, and why did you not do that?" Or does He actually say:

[1276] The idea seems to be that this action, the instruction of which verbally parallels the Qur'anic verse, is performed immediately. Possibly it refers to taking and inspecting an item of trade.

[1277] Q. 7:145.

[1278] Q. 27:39.

[1279] Q. 28:26.

"Do this, and do not do that." On the contrary [according to the Determinists], if [God] commands and forbids, He actually commands and forbids Himself. Then, in reality, He Himself commits what is forbidden, and obeys what He commands. Then, He punishes others other than Himself, tormenting and rewarding them. Nevertheless, we call Him wise and merciful. One who has the attribute of mercy and wisdom is majestic above this. Also, on this basis, it would be necessary that [the servants] do not truly feel pain and pleasure, and these two should belong to Him. He is majestic and exalted above such a thing. Moreover, the messengers and scriptures would lose their meaning, because they would become directed to God with commands, prohibitions, promises and threats, and not to someone other than Him. Then, the wisdom in the creation of creatures would be nullified and become in vain, even if[1280] [the creature's] knowledge attains to cognizance [of the action]. Whoever's actions occur based on ingratitude and denial of blessings, whose reports occur based on lying, and whose actions take place based on folly, deserves to be an expelled devil. Such is the case and there is no doubt about it. This is similar to their saying: God was not knowing and powerful, then He became so. Hence, perhaps His governance of the actions that are attributed to the creatures occurs in that time. *God is majestic and exalted above this.*

3) Then, the Qadarīs, who are given the name *i'tizāl* [i.e., called the "Mu'tazila"), have attributed determinism to us [i.e., the People of Monotheism], despite our freedom from it both in terms of belief and speech. However, they slander us in this issue, just as they do with the name Qadarīs. Next, upon comparing the two schools [the Mu'tazila and the People of Monotheism], let us say which of us is more worthy of that [name]. This is so that they know the impertinence and grave folly of [the Mu'tazila], as we have explained in the matter of the Qadarīs. [The Mu'tazila] accuse us of determinism because we reject the notion that the power to act exists before the time of action. Then, [the Mu'tazila] say the action exists at a time when there is no power. To say that the action exists when the power is absent is closer to the meaning of determinism than to say that the power is together with the action. This is true for whoever understands

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[1280] Reading *in kāna* on MS. 167r.

determinism and free choice. The following explanation will also reveal this point: the action cannot be imagined to occur in the state of incapacity; its existence is imagined in the state in which incapacity is lifted. Therefore, to imagine it with incapacity lifted is more elevated and eloquent than to imagine it present, since [incapacity] is the cause of the interruption of the action, whereas power is really the action's cause. This is supported by the simultaneous impairment of visual perception with the disappearance of the previous vision. Such is the case with the operation of hearing and other senses. Again, this is the case with the act of free choice disappearing at the time of incapacity; the absence of power is more obvious than its presence. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Another aspect [of this discussion] is the statement of the Muʿtazila: "Will is the choice of the action; it precedes the action and is not present [with it]." The [action] is found at time of existence without a will and choice from [the agent]. The due right of the initial choice has departed, since it is possible for compulsion to have occurred in the second moment. It is impossible for [compulsion] to occur in the [same] moment in which there is free choice, and it is established. So, it is affirmed that [according to the Muʿtazila the servant's] action is not realized with free choice. That is compulsion and a sign of determinism.

The Muʿtazila obligate [God's] enmity, friendship, and eternal stay in Paradise and Hell [to the servant] due to such action. However, everything that happens at the time of its occurrence is without a free choice, without power, without a command and without a prohibition. Anyone who thinks carefully about it finds that, in reality, it is clearly the teaching of the Determinists. However, [the Muʿtazila] are deceitful Determinists, whereas their counterparts are honest Determinists. Thereupon, a claim of the Muʿtazila is as follows: If one wills an action in the nearest time, even if he does not like the action and wants to thwart it, it will happen, and one will become an enemy or friend of God because of it. This would be the case despite not being able to prevent it before or during its occurrence. Yet that time should not be a time when it is impossible for that action to disappear, since according to [the Muʿtazila], it should only disappear upon prevention or subjugation. Therefore, what we mentioned has been established and the occurrence of [the action] is definitely by determinism. In addition, though [the Mu'tazila] frequently use the name "determination" (*al-qadar*) in inappropriate contexts, they are named after it [i.e., determinism] because it applies to them. This is despite their attempt to ascribe determinism to others. *Help and protection against errors is from God alone.*

4) Then, the Mu'tazila named the Ḥusaynīs [i.e., the followers of al-Ḥusayn al-Najjār] "Determinists" because the Ḥusaynīs argued that although the servant has the power of the action he commits, he does not have the power to perform its opposite before or during the time of action. The difference between [the Ḥusaynīs] and the Mu'tazila is especially in terminology because the former says: "[The servant has the power] to perform the action; yet there is a favor God did not grant him [i.e., power for the other action]". The Mu'tazila say: "God has given [the servant] everything that is beneficial for him". Therefore, they agree in what God has given to the servant. However, according to the Mu'tazila, [the servant] does not have power during the action, whereas, according to the Ḥusaynīs, he has the power and choice of the action he performs. In that case, the power and will [of the servant] are more than according to the Mu'tazila. So, if the Mu'tazila had a little shame, how would they have named the Ḥusaynīs "Determinists"? *Strength comes from God alone.* The principle in the view of al-Ḥusayn [al-Najjār] is as follows: [the servant] wastes one of the two powers during the action and he has no excuse for this wasting. According to the Mu'tazila, he has no power with or without wasting. So, if one is fair, let him judge which of these two qualities is more similar to determinism.

Then, [another proof] that establishes that the Mu'tazila are the Determinists is their saying: "The servant has action, whether he wants it or not." Yet for whoever loses his will during the action such that he is forgetful, ignorant or powerless, there is no escape from this [i.e., being unable to act]. In addition, [the Mu'tazila] give the servant the power to will what God does not will in His sovereignty, and to wish what He does not wish in His dominion, even though God wills something else. This is the sign of coercion and determinism. [The Mu'tazila] condemned the Determinists for exposing the servant to determinism, based on what [the Determinists] saw as God's dominion and majesty. Then, [the Mu'tazila] stated out of folly and ignorance, that the Lord of the Worlds was in a state of determinism. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Now, let us present a section from the matters in which the Mu'tazila condemned Ḥusayn [al-Najjār] in terms of expression, but concurred with him in the final analysis. Al-Ḥusayn said: The disbeliever has no power to believe during his disbelief. The power of belief according to him is facilitation and protection. The Mu'tazila agree with him on the notion the disbeliever was not protected and made successful. On the contrary, he was forsaken and left alone to ask his own opinion. According to al-Ḥusayn, this is the power of disbelief. Therefore, they both agreed on the meaning of that which they differed in naming. The point of intersection between them in this question is that they regard facilitation and protection as the power of belief and abandonment and forsaking the power of disbelief, not to overlook what really needs to be said by solely speaking on the matter of power. *God alone leads to success.*

Al-Ḥusayn, on the other hand, said: "The meaning of will in relation to God, exalted is He, is that He is not defeated nor subjugated". The Muʿtazila gave this meaning in relation to all the acts of creatures. Therefore, the human is invincible and not defeated nor subjugated. Thus, the matter has been invalidated regarding will, and it persists only in the interpretation of will and nothing else.[1281] In addition, [al-Ḥusayn] said: "The actions of the servants are created. Therefore, their creator willed them to be as He created them." On the other hand, according to Muʿtazilī teaching, the actions of the servants are not created by God. The issue, then, is not related to will, but the creation of actions. Al-Kaʿbī said: "The meaning of will is that the agent is voluntary and unforced. The same [principle] is binding in every matter.

Then, the Muʿtazila affirm only the following from God to the world: There was God and no world, then the world came into existence. Therefore, it is in this sense that God is a creator for it, and it is in this manner that He is willing. Al-Ḥusayn, on the contrary, said the following in relation to the actions of the servants: "While God existed, these actions did not exist, then they came into existence, and their emergence occurred through the will of God, which is interpreted as He has described [i.e., He is not defeated nor subjugated]. His creation [of actions] was that He existed, and they did not. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1281] The proper definition of will, as understood by al-Māturīdī, has been abandoned and all that is left are false interpretations.

Al-Ḥusayn sees [God] as one who in the beginning willed the world to come into existence as it is, and similarly, willed every creature to exist as it is. The Muʿtazila, on the other hand, negate the meaning of will to God. They only hold that God existed, and creatures did not exist, then they came into existence. So, it is more required [for the Muʿtazilīs] to be [Determinists against God].[1282] *Strength comes from God alone.*

The Muʿtazila say that the threat obtains for one whose action removes him from belief. Likewise, al-Ḥusayn and all the People of Deferral (*irjāʾ*) [i.e., those who defer judgment over the consequences of their actions entirely to God] say that everyone who due to his action [i.e., sin] has had the name "belief" disappear, will remain in Hell forever.[1283] *Strength comes from God alone.*

The disagreement between [the Muʿtazila and the Ḥusaynīs] is not over the reality of the threat but in what [action] causes one to leave belief. Therefore, it is false to argue on the basis of the verses about the threat in this question.

[1282] That is, God did not choose to bring the world into existence. This reflects his earlier polemic against them.

[1283] This neatly foreshadows the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter Seven

Enquiries of Major Sin and the Religious Status of Major Sinners

7.1. Enquiry: [The Religious Status of Sins and Sinners]

Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said: People discussed the position of sins and the way to name their perpetrators.

1) A group considered all sins equal in leading one out of the faith and based their view on His statement: "Whosoever disobeys God and His Messenger [and transgresses His limits, He will make him enter Fire, where he will dwell forever; his will be a shameful doom]".[1284] "And it is not fitting for a believer, man or woman..."[1285] In attributing the name "disobedience" to one, all sins are the same. On this basis, attribution of the name "going astray" and the necessity of remaining in Hell are the same thing.

i) The verse: "If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden, [We will expiate your evil deeds and make you enter at a noble gate]"[1286] may be interpreted in two ways:

a) God forgives the sins of a servant upon his repentance, according to His statement: "He will abide therein disdained for ever; save him who repents...";[1287] And His words, Most High: "O you who believe! Turn unto God in sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will conceal your evil deeds",[1288] and other verses.

b) [The sins that are meant] are actually the s among them that have been committed forgetfully and heedlessly, so they are forgiven. This is as He says, Most High: "God will not take you to task for that which is unintentional in your oaths...";[1289] "And there is no sin for you in the mistakes that you make unintentionally."[1290] There are also reports indicating that [this kind of sin] will be forgiven.[1291]

[1284] Q. 4:14:

[1285] Q. 33:36. The verse in full is as follows: "And it is not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by God and His Messenger to have any option about their decision: if anyone disobeys God and His Messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path".

[1286] Q. 4:31.

[1287] Q. 25:69-70.

[1288] Q. 66:8.

ii) Then, a group of them [i.e., in the first category] ascribed to the sinner the name "disbelief" for two reasons:

a) The first reason is His statement [in the following verses]: "Only the most wretched must endure [the Fire], he who denies and turns away"[1292]; "This We awarded them because of their ingratitude. [Punish We ever any save the ingrates?]";[1293] "He who does wrong will have the recompense thereof";[1294] "Whoso brings an ill-deed will be awarded but the like thereof";[1295] "And whoso does ill a mote's weight will see it then."[1296] [These verses] establish that there is punishment for s, only the ungrateful will be punished, and only those who are mentioned must endure [the Fire]. In addition, God, exalted is He, says: "Those who insult God and His messenger, [God has cursed them in the world and the Hereafter, and has prepared for them the doom of the disdained]."[1297] Every disobedient person insults the Messenger of God. *Strength comes from God alone.*

b) Secondly, every believer's promise of belief is not to disobey God in what He has commanded and prohibited. Whoever disobeys God does not fulfill [this promise]. In addition, a [believer's] conviction depends on his attitude when he is tested. In fact, [this point is expressed by] His words: "*Alif. Lām. Mīm.* Do people imagine that they will be left (at ease) because they say, "We believe," [and will not be tested with affliction]?"[1298] God has said in another place: "Verily He knows the hypocrites."[1299] By these

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[1289] Q. 5:89.

[1290] Q. 33:5.

[1291] In this context, one may cite the following hadith: "God has removed from my community the responsibility of sins that are committed by mistake, forgetfulness and coercion." Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, *al-Ṭalaq*, 6.

[1292] Q. 92:15-16.

[1293] Q. 34:17.

[1294] Q. 4:123.

[1295] Q. 6:160.

[1296] Q. 99:8.

[1297] Q. 33:57.

[1298] Q. 29:1-3.

[1299] Q. 29:11.

[verses], it has been established that one deserves the name of disbelief when his lie is revealed in his professed conviction. Reasoning also requires this, because one who opposes God with [the sin he has committed], responds to Satan in what he calls towards and obeys him in what he commands. Such a person has worshipped Satan and whoever worships Satan is a disbeliever. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iii) A group of them [i.e., in the first category] call the sinner not "disbeliever" but "polytheist" because he has reached his state with deeds not with words. God Most High has said, "And whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work, and make none a sharer of the worship due unto his Lord",[1300] informing that there may be polytheism in the action. Likewise, the giving of this appellation to the people of polytheism is because they associate others with God in worship. This is the meaning of His statement: "And most of them believe not in God except that they attribute partners (unto Him)."[1301] Again, God has said: "God forgives not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him…"[1302] We have already explained that the forgiven sins are those that have been committed by mistake and under compulsion, as the Book [i.e., the Qur'an] also expresses.[1303] *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) Others have divided the sins into two parts and identified some of them as s. These are forgiven for reasons that vary according to their views, such as avoiding major sins, being excused, and being punished. Then there are major sins, which are differed upon according to the two views [we listed] above [i.e., the person who commits a major sin will be a disbeliever or a polytheist]. As for the s, their view – which is our view – is that they will not lead their owner out of belief.[1304] The idea of staying in Hell forever despite the presence of belief is false because it means breaking the promise as expressed in the following verse: "And whosoever does ill a mote's weight

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[1300] Q. 18:110.

[1301] Q. 12:106.

[1302] Q. 4:48, Q. 4:116.

[1303] The references are likely to be to Q. 33:15 and 16:106 for "mistakes" and "compulsion" respectively.

[1304] Note that al-Māturīdī is only expressing his view on s here and not stating that major sins lead to disbelief, as he goes on to clarify.

will see it then."[1305] Again, [the promise] is given verses, such as the following: "Then whosoever does some good works and is a believer, [there will be no rejection of his effort]."[1306]

i) Then, there are several [pieces of evidence] that prevent naming a sinner in reality by disbelief and polytheism:

a) First, God commanded His Prophet to seek forgiveness for himself and for believing men and women.[1307] However, if it has been proven that one is a disbeliever or polytheist, it is unthinkable for Him to command [the Prophet to pray for his sins to be forgiven]. In fact, [this point is clearly stated in the following verse]: "It is not for the Prophet, and those who believe, to pray for the forgiveness of idolaters."[1308] In addition, God commanded [the Prophet] to seek forgiveness for the believers. However, it is impossible He commands [the Prophet] to seek forgiveness with the name "belief" for those whose [belief in the Prophet has] disappeared from them, because this will lead to inconsistency.[1309] Then, according to what I have mentioned, God forbade the Prophet from asking forgiveness for the polytheists, and for the hypocrites by His word: "So those who stayed behind from the Bedouins",[1310] and, "Whether you ask forgiveness for them [or ask not forgiveness for them is] all is one for them..."[1311] Again, God forbade [the Prophet] to perform [the funeral] prayer [of hypocrites]. Hence, it has been established that those for whom God commanded [His Prophet] to ask forgiveness were actually believers.

Then, if the believer had no sins or their sins were forgiven, it would be impossible for him to ask forgiveness for them, because asking forgiveness is asking for forgiveness of sin. To ask [forgiveness of sin] of the one whose sins have been forgiven is to hide the blessing of [forgiveness], which is to be ungrateful for the blessing. On the contrary, the due right of that [blessing of forgiveness] is to offer gratitude and praise. Asking for forgiveness where there is no sin means being ungrateful to [the blessing of] protection and asking God not to do injustice because tormenting such [an innocent person] is injustice according to His judgment.

[1305] Q. 99:8.

[1306] Q. 21:94.

[1307] See Q. 47:19: "So know (O Muḥammad) that there is no god save God, and ask forgiveness for your sin and for believing men and believing women."

[1308] Q. 9:113.

[1309] Lit. "lying".

[1310] Q. 48:16.

[1311] Q. 63:6.

Then, it is impossible for the Messenger of God and the angels to ask forgiveness for those whom they were commanded to ask [forgiveness for], and they will not be answered. With this, it has been established that the name "belief" is not lost due to every sin and that some sins are forgiven only through repentance, because one other than the sinner themself asking for forgiveness for does not involve repentance. This refutes the Mu'tazila in removing the name "belief" for every unforgiven sin until the sinner asks for forgiveness. It poses a refutation too against the Khawārij for the reasons we have already mentioned. *God knows best.*

b) Again, God Most High said about the sins He does not forgive: "Whether you ask forgiveness for them [or ask not forgiveness for them it is all one for them]."[1312] Subsequently, He said: "And turn unto God together, O believers, in order that you may succeed"[1313] and, "O you who believe! Turn unto God in sincere repentance! [It may be that your Lord will conceal your evil deeds]."[1314] Thus, besides affirming their belief, God made repentance necessary for people and informed that He would forgive them if they repent. These verses involve two refutations:

I) It is a refutation against the Mu'tazilī [claim] that the name of belief will disappear in every sin that is not forgiven unless repentance is made, as these verses affirm belief for such people.

II) Against the Khawārij, it is a refutation of them naming the sinners "disbelievers" and "polytheists" because if one became a disbeliever because of his sin, he could not be named "believer", nor would he be commanded to fulfill duties other than belief. *God alone leads to success.*

c) If [a believer] is named a disbeliever because of the sin he has committed, this appellation is a metaphorical use, since such an act is the act of disbelievers etc. For example, one is named "deaf and blind" because he cannot grasp the reality that may be reached with the eyes and ears. The following verse is a good example for this: "Whoever disbelieves in God after his belief..."[1315] So, the verse uses the name "disbelief" not in the real sense, but in a lexical sense, in the context of actions that occur due to someone's compulsion despite his heart's contentment with belief. For this reason, it is sometimes possible for one to be metaphorically named [a disbeliever] for some accidental reasons, and such is the case with [being named a disbeliever] because of one's deeds. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1312] Q. 63:6.
[1313] Q. 24:31.
[1314] Q. 66:8.

ii) Again, God Most High says: "And whosoever does good a mote's weight will see it then."[1316] Then, it is known that one will not be rewarded for the good deed he does in the state of polytheism, nor will one be punished for the evil he committed while he was a disbeliever after he has believed. This is due to the statement of God Most High: "Yet whosoever does evil or wrongs his own soul...";[1317] "Tell those who disbelieve that if they cease (from persecution of believers) that which is past will be forgiven them";[1318] and "[Save him who repents and believes and does righteous work;] as for such, God will change their evil deeds to good deeds."[1319] Investigation of what I have cited indicates that both things [i.e., good and evil] will be requited. This rewarding, however, is impossible at the time of the major and s, according to the Mu'tazilī doctrine [that if one commits a sin, he loses his belief]. This is also impossible on the Khārijī doctrine [i.e., if one commits a sin, he becomes a polytheist or a disbeliever]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

a) Then, God the Almighty says: "God forgives not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him..."[1320] However, it is known that the sin of idolatry may be forgiven if repented from. Therefore, it is false to include [idolatry followed by repentance] in the Book's categorization [of unforgivable sins]. Also, the view that the major sins that are not repented from are unforgivable is false because God, exalted is His praise, has ascribed to Himself the will to forgive. This is in conformity with wisdom, and to reject it is folly. God is majestic and exalted above that. Therefore, the verdict [of falsity] that I have mentioned applies to both views [i.e., the Muʿtazilī and Khāriji doctrines].

[1315] Q. 16:106.
[1316] Q. 99:7.
[1317] Q. 4:110.
[1318] Q. 8:38.
[1319] Q. 25:70.
[1320] Q. 4:48.

b) Then, that through which the prophets and saints were tested [i.e., the s they committed] refute the doctrine of the Khawārij who declare people to be disbelievers because of s. Whatever makes one a disbeliever [i.e., sin] annuls prophecy and sainthood. If one's belief in the prophets is such, one has denied the prophets. [Such people] have fallen into disbelief because they exaggerated sin too much, whereas disbelief itself is the gravest sin. This is the due right of one who transgresses the limits of God in judgment and goes to extremes in His religion: that his destruction comes from the one who is most promising as a means of salvation [i.e., a prophet]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

According to the Muʿtazila's doctrine [of sins], God described the prophets as praying to Him earnestly in secret, with hope and fear, crying and imploring Him because of their lapses, so that their supplications were accepted, and their requests were granted. Were their [minor] sins not possible to be punished due to [divine] wisdom, or if they were not afraid of being punished for their sins, [the prophet in question] would be described as exceeding the limit, and as committing injustice and transgression, which is worse than lapses. This negates the Mu'tazilī doctrine that affirms [automatic] forgiveness for s [if one refrains from major sins] and sees the divine act of punishment as devoid of wisdom, as well as the Khārijī doctrine that removes the name "belief" from one [who has committed a sin]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

c) Then, it is an abandoned opinion to regard s as disbelief and polytheism or to see the eternal torment in Hell as their punishment. For this view renders the naming of God "forgiving" and "merciful" meaningless, as it rejects that any small sin and lapse may be forgiven without repentance, and after knowing God as pardoning, forgiving and gracious, it requires His enmity due to [s]. Because of this view, one becomes hostile to God, from whom he rejects the name of forgiveness and to whom he attributes those qualities which characterize hard-hearted and condemning people. Thus, he deserves that which he has said [i.e., to fall into disbelief] because [changing] the attributes of the Lord is the gravest sin. Then, [these people] deny [the prophets] in these states [i.e., of] when the latter are tested. Whoever denies a prophet for a time, he is himself a disbeliever without doubt. Then, he characterizes the Lord with injustice, as this view necessitates nullifying the good deeds of one because of a lapse. However, what is fair is the fact that it is manifest God, Mighty and Majestic, requites with both good and evil in His graciousness. Moreover, this attitude [i.e., of those who disbelieve in the prophethood of the prophets because of their s] is to accuse God of ignorance for not knowing who is fit for prophethood and who will accomplish the entrusted task. In addition, there is no one who can avoid [minor lapses], so this entails burdening [the servant] beyond capacity. Then, [one who adopts this doctrine] loses their fear and hope, and the situation results [in loss of] trust and despair. However, [God] has testified that these two [states] are misguidance and disbelief. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[Now that we have concluded our discussion of the status and consequences of s] let us look into what has been said about major sins, since what is less than them [i.e., s] are more likely to be forgiven. Also, the divergence of opinion about the [consequences of] these sins has had a clear impact on the [Muslim] community. Therefore, it is more suitable to focus our discourse on it. *God alone leads to success.*

7.2. Enquiry: [Disagreement over the Status of Major Sinners]

Then, the Muslim community disagreed about Muslims who committed major sins. The condition for these sins [not being disbelief] is that one commits them for reasons such as succumbing to one's lust, heedlessness, fury, partiality, and the hope of pardon and forgiveness, without considering them lawful and without slighting the one who commands and forbids them.

Some considered those [who committed major sins] to be disbelievers, some polytheists, some neither believers nor disbelievers, some hypocrites, and some considered them to believers in any case, though disobedient in deeds, and a sinner, without using the unrestricted names "sin" and "depravity" about them, except for those he knows deserve such an appellation. One understands that God may punish [a Muslim] in proportion to his sin or forgive him for his righteousness in his servanthood and other good deeds.

Others suspended judgment about the divine threat [of punishment for those who commit major sins], that is, whether it means those who consider the sin to be lawful, or others, but deemed it necessary [for those who consider the sin to be lawful]. The fact that [the groups] I have mentioned distinguish between minor and major sins in terms of the possibility of forgiveness for s and the preservation of the name "belief", necessitated the limitation of the threat to major sins.

1) On the other hand, what has been established from the punishment for disbelief and polytheism etc. has necessitated the ascription of the name "polytheism" according to one group and the title "disbelief" according to another.[1321] This is supported by His saying: "No one despairs of His mercy save disbelieving folk";[1322] and, "Who despairs of the mercy of his Lord save those who are astray?"[1323] In addition, one who has committed a major sin has judged by other than what God has revealed and has abandoned judging by it. God Most High says: "Whosoever judges not by that which God has revealed: such are disbelievers."[1324]

i) Then [according to this view], God named those who committed [major sins], such as sinfulness, wickedness and injustice, by names he had given to the disbelievers, so the name "disbelief" was also required. In addition, God has divided people into groups whose worldly and otherworldly affairs proceed by divine decree.[1325] So, He has said: "He it is Who created you, but one of you is a disbeliever and one of you is a believer"[1326]; "Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will, let him disbelieve"[1327];

[1321] This is a reference to different doctrines of the Khawārij. See 7.1 (2) i b II.

[1322] Q. 12:87.

[1323] Q. 15:56.

[1324] Q. 5:44. The argument here from the perspective of the Khawārij and Muʿtazila evidences from Qur'anic usage that the names "disbelievers" and "astray" can be applied to those who despair of the mercy of God or those who do not judge by what He reveals, which are fundamentally actions. See 7.2 (1) i a.

[1325] Lit. "has made His pen flow upon" (*jarā ʿalayhim al-qalam*).

[1326] Q. 64:2.

[1327] Q. 18:29.

"And whomsoever it is God's will to guide..."[1328]; "He sends whom He will astray"[1329]; and, "Is he who is a believer like unto him who is a sinner? They are not alike."[1330] Then, God declared that those who are named "sinner" (*fāsiq*) are disbelievers. God has said about the situation of people in the Hereafter: "On the Day when (some) faces will be whitened [and (some) faces will be blackened]"[1331]; and, "Then whoso is given his account in his right hand..."[1332] Thus, He has divided all people into two groups, so there is no third group in reality. In addition, He has stated that He has prepared the fire for the disbelievers. Since the divine threat has been established for one who commits a major sin, it has become necessary to consider him a disbeliever.

a) Then, God Most High declared that only the disbelievers would despair of His mercy. In the opinion of these people, it is necessary to give up hope [even] on those for whom the name "disbelief" is not required. Names are neither useful nor harmful to their owners; harms and benefits lie in the realities of those possessing the names. If it is necessary for one to stay in the fire forever, the title has no use, no matter whether he is [named] a believer or a disbeliever. However, the naming of one who is subjected to the punishment of disbelief as "disbeliever" cannot be prevented. *Strength comes from God alone.*

b) They considered the divine threat [of the punishment in the Hereafter] necessary, since [God] would become a liar if the divine threat were lifted [i.e., if those who committed major sins were not punished in the Hereafter]. God is majestic above that. All these things I have said are binding on the Mu'tazila in their attitude to avoid naming those who commit major sins "disbelievers". Two of the doctrines of the Islamic sects [i.e., the Mu'tazila, who do not call those who commit major sins "disbelievers", and the Khawārij, who consider sinners to be disbelievers], either occupied themselves in vain in relation to names [related to disbelief] or nullified the great value of faith in people's hearts, and the greatness that God attributed to Islam in the intellects. Thus, one of the two Islamic sects [i.e., the

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[1328] Q. 6:125.

[1329] Q. 16:93.

[1330] Q. 32:18.

[1331] Q. 3:106.

[1332] Q. 84:7.

Khawārij] made belief the title of all goodness, thus removing the fear of Islam's change, but also destroying the sublimity of its value, because they made everything that could be named "goodness" share in its name. The Ḥashwiyya and the Muʿtazila share in this attitude. However, the Muʿtazila are distinguished [from the Khawārij] in avoiding giving the name ["disbelief"] to those who commit major sins, though they accept that all the punishments required by disbelief will also be inflicted upon those who commit major sins.[1333] As a result of the Muʿtazila's refusal to name those who commit major sins "disbelievers", all they have left is their fear of the title "disbelief" because of the greatness of the divine threat towards disbelief. Otherwise, if the naming is not meant for a benefit that is hoped for or for a harm that is avoided, then, whether bad or good, it discloses those named by it, although no goodness and badness is required by the goodness or badness of the naming. *Strength comes from God alone.* Thus, the title "polytheism" and "disbelief" falls into the category described above [i.e., the category of major sins].

c) As for one who attributes the title "hypocrite" to the one who commits a major sin, it is because the belief he professed with his tongue and the promise he made that he would abide by the limits of faith and protect the limits of God contradict that which emerged through his actions.[1334] That is why God Most High has said: "Verily God knows those who believe, and verily He knows the hypocrites."[1335]; and, "*Alif. Lām. Mīm.* Do men imagine that they will be left (at ease) [because they say, "We believe," and will not be tested with affliction]?"[1336] This verse reports that whether tongues are telling the truth or lying [when they say "We believe"] will be revealed by a test. Likewise, it is reported from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, that he said: "The signs of the hypocrite are three: when he speaks he lies, when he makes a promise he breaks it, and when he is entrusted with something he betrays that trust."[1337] According to one who holds this view, all three of these characteristics have come from one who commits a major sin. [Therefore, one who commits a major sin is named a "hypocrite"].

[1333] Thus, though the Muʿtazila do not call the (unrepentant) major sinner a disbeliever, they believe he stays forever in Hell.

[1334] This may refer to the Ibāḍīs. See Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 132-33.

[1335] Q. 29:11.

[1336] Q. 29:2-3.

[1337] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-Īmān*, 25.

ii) In their argumentation, the Mu'tazila rely on the fact that one who commits a major sin is named by filthy names, and that belief is one of the pure names by which [a major sinner] is not named. Also, the divine promise has occurred with the name "belief", and the promise does not accept specificity.[1338] Then, the divine threat has occurred for the one who committed a major sin. So, it is false that one is a believer and is not named by it, and that he becomes a disbeliever by that which does not require naming him a "disbeliever". Therefore, there has been established consensus that such a one [i.e., one who is not named "believer" but did not commit the sin that requires naming "disbeliever"] has a title: sinfulness, wickedness, and injustice. Then, according to the Mu'tazila, there are two issues to be discussed as regards the divine threat:

a) The generality of the reports about [the divine threat].

b) The second is His statement: "If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden, [We will expiate your evil deeds and make you enter at a noble gate]".[1339] This verse explains the unforgivable and forgivable sins. Moreover, the threat of eternal torment is more effective and pronounced in withholding and restraining [one from evil]. Therefore, it is more appropriate. This is because since the divine threat is necessary, then entering Hell is also necessary, and there is no mention of the exit [of those who enter Hell]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: Let us say, and help is sought from God alone: Although they [i.e., the Mu'tazila and the Khawārij] disagree among themselves, they agree that the threat includes actions by the believers that are not polytheism. On the contrary, it is valid for every sin that leads its perpetrator out of belief and drops the name "belief" from him. The Murji'a agree with them [i.e., the Mu'tazila and the Khawārij] that the divine threat is necessary in relation to every sin that leads its perpetrator out of belief. Then, although the Murji'a believe in

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[1338] That is, "belief" is not a general term that can be specified into two categories: belief along with major sin and belief without it.

[1339] Q. 4:31.

the punishment of sin, they are afraid that the sinning believers might incur [punishment in the Hereafter], whereas the [Mu'tazila and Khawārij] are not afraid for them.[1340] The Murji'a bring up as evidence the generality of the narrations [i.e., the verses and reports about punishment]. Thus, after these explanations regarding the views of all sects, the following has been established: The Murji'a, that is, the sect which defers the judgment about the religious consequences of sins to God [and postpones it to the Hereafter], uses them [i.e., the relevant verses and reports] more forcefully in their generality than those who call to their generality [i.e., the Mu'tazila and the Khawārij] because in the final analysis, they made the divine threat exclusive to one of the two groups of people: those who are unbelievers. *Strength comes from God alone.*

3) Through the evidence from the Qur'an, the general understanding of the people of belief and the linguistic conventions, it has been established that belief is assent. It is through assent [to the tenets of Islam] that we have belief; that the Qur'anic rulings on the lawful and the forbidden function; that worship is done; that we participate in congregations; that we gather in the sessions of remembrance and charity, and are not excluded from [people]; and that we accept the due right of believers. Such is the case with everything through which the divine address [i.e., responsibility] takes place. No Mu'tazilī, Khārijī or Ḥashwī accepts to be outside the rulings of the divine address, even though there are people amongst themselves who have committed sins and evils that they know or do not know to be major sins. In that case, it has been established that belief did not go away from him [i.e., the perpetrator of the major sin] and that the name "belief" obtained for him. With these explanations – and it is known that those who reject these explanations deny the truth due to obstinacy – it becomes clear that the claims of the Khawārij and the Mu'tazila [i.e., considering sinning to negate belief] are false. *Strength comes from God alone.*

i) Again, while God, exalted is He, states that a believer who commits a sin will encounter the threat of His judgment, He continued to use the name "belief" for him according to His statement: "O you who believe! Why do you say that which you will not do?..."[1341] Thus, God has necessitated His hatred towards him, along with the name "belief", and He articulated this with the expression of rebuke, "Why do you say... ?", which is impossible to express prior to the connection to the sin. Here, "hatred" does not necessitate a sin that must be forgiven on account of wisdom.[1342] Again, God has said: "And if two parties of believers fall to fighting, [then make peace between them. And if one party of them does wrong to the other, fight you that which does wrong till they return unto the ordinance of God.]"[1343] This verse, while attributing the name "belief" to the people in question and naming them "believers", necessitated the name "wrongdoing" for one of the two warring parties, and made it necessary for one who witnessed the incident to help the attacked and to ensure that the attacker return to God's command. If this [i.e., the act of wrongdoing] was a departure from belief, then what should be done would be something different from what is stated in the verse. Again, God has said: "O you who believe! Retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the murdered."[1344] As is known, [retaliation] is only necessary because of the willful murder. Therefore, at the beginning of the verse, God attributed the name "belief" to them [i.e., to the murderers], maintained their brotherhood [between the murderer and the victim], and declared that "This is an alleviation and a mercy from your Lord."[1345] It is highly unlikely that these qualities are related to those whom the action [i.e., the act of murder] has taken out of belief. God said, "And those who believed but did not leave their homes, you have no duty to protect them [till they leave their homes]."[1346] Then He said, "But if they seek help from you in the matter of religion..."[1347] He attributed the name "belief" to them and united them in religion even though they failed to emigrate [to Medina]. However, the divine threat against those who failed to emigrate is very grave, as may be seen in [the following verses]: "As for those whom the angels take (in death) while they wrong themselves…";[1348] "O you who believe! Choose not My enemy and your enemy for allies";[1349] and, "[O you who believe!] Betray not God and His messenger…"[1350] Thus, despite the ugliness of what they did, God attributed the name "belief" to the people in question. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1340] For the Khawārij, the believer is free of sin, as otherwise he would be a disbeliever. For the Mu'tazila, if the believer repents from major sins, then s are forgiven. In both cases, there are no believers that receive punishment in the Hereafter.

[1341] Q. 61:2.

[1342] Hence, despite "hatred", this person remains a believer, in opposition to the view of the Khawārij.

[1343] Q. 49: 9.

[1344] Q. 2:178.

[1345] Q. 2:178.

[1346] Q. 8:72.

[1347] Q. 8:72.

ii) Again, God Most High says, "O you who believe! Turn unto God in sincere repentance!";[1351] "And turn unto God together, O believers, [in order that you may succeed]."[1352] [In these verses], God has revealed that they took on sins that will be forgiven and expiated with repentance, while they continue to use the title "belief". However, according to [the Khawārij and Muʿtazila], this is impossible. Thus, it has been established that the [correct] doctrine is that of those who do not remove the name "belief" from [sinners]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iii) Another kind of [argument] is as follows: God Most High has made many acts of worship obligatory with the name "belief", and in most of them, He has made the signs of the lawful and the forbidden dependent on [its] presence or absence. Then, He made those who were believers but committed sinful acts partners in these [actions] with others [i.e., those who have not sinned]. Thus, it has been established that the name "belief" has not disappeared from the sinners. In addition, the explanation of the state to which the name "belief" is attributed has already been made, to such an extent that the rational person need not prolong his speech. Then, the consensus of the transmitters on the affirmation of [the Prophet's] intercession, the [Muslim] community's passing on from one generation to another the tradition of performing the funeral prayer for all the dead from the People of the Qibla [i.e., from the Muslim congregation] and begging for forgiveness and mercy for them is evidence for those who are not willing to deny the sound reports and oppose the leaders of right guidance. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1348] Q. 4:97.
[1349] Q. 60:1.
[1350] Q. 8:27.
[1351] Q. 66:8.
[1352] Q. 24:31.

iv) Then, it is a contradictory approach for the Muʿtazila, [with regard to those who commit major sins], on the one hand saying that one should despair of His mercy, and on the other, negating the name "disbelief" from them [and not admitting that they are disbelievers], according to God's statement, Most High: "None despairs of the mercy of God save disbelieving folk."[1353] For [in this verse], God has gathered disbelief with despairing [of His mercy]. Thus, whoever accepts one must accept the other. According to us and [the Muʿtazila, the person who commits a major sin] is not a disbeliever because disbelief means "belying" according to custom. Since one who commits a major sin is in a state in which he hopes for God's pardon and fears His punishment due to assent [to the tenets of Islam], and since one who despairs of the mercy of his Lord has strayed and is unaware of God, it has been established that one who commits a major sin is not a liar. On the other hand, disbelief is actually the name for "concealment", and one who commits a major sin does not conceal any of his Lord's blessings and does not deny His due right. Therefore, the view that one who commits a major sin is a disbeliever is false. Likewise, the term "belief" means assent according to tradition and custom. It is known that the sinner has not belied God in any matter, therefore it is established that he is a believer. *God alone leads to success.*

4) Then, the truth is to say: All the Khawārij and Muʿtazila become disbelieversupon committing major sins and deserve to stay forever in Hell, according to their own opinion. The adherents of the various sects in Islam other than them do not accept this view for the following reasons:

i) [The Khawārij and the Muʿtazila] agreed on [preventing] the blessing of God's mercy [by saying that those who commit major sins will enter Hell]. This is the nature of disbelief in accordance with the verse I have just mentioned [i.e., "No one despairs of His mercy save disbelieving folk"[1354]] and as required by His statement: "Those who disbelieve in the revelations of God and in (their) Meeting with Him, such have no hope of My mercy."[1355] Thus, the name "disbelief" and the eternal torment of Hell became necessary for both groups [i.e., Khawārij and the Muʿtazila]. As for those who believe in God's [revealed] verses, they describe Him as pardoning, forgiving and merciful, and attribute these qualities to Him. Thus, they are hopeful, and it is impermissible to testify about them [disbelief and the eternal torment of Hell]. So, everyone has shouldered the consequences of his own doctrine, as stated by God Most High: "We appoint for him that unto which he himself has turned and expose him unto Hell – a hapless journey's end!"[1356] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1353] Q. 12:87.

[1354] Q. 12:87.

[1355] Q. 29:23.

ii) Secondly, [the Khawārij and the Muʿtazila] together narrowed God's mercy and rendered it incapable of accommodating a sin by making it impossible for one to be punished for sins that are not major. In this case, there is no wisdom in His mercy in relation to the sins that will not be punished, nor is there wisdom in His pardon in relation to the things that do not need to be pardoned. In contrast, they expanded the divine wrath and anger in terms of wisdom to accommodate every sin for which one may be punished. So, there is neither pardon nor mercy in their doctrine. Hence, the reality of this doctrine is deprivation. As for those who describe Him by the breadth of mercy and the greatness of pardon, their right is forgiveness and pardon because everyone who is generous is characterized by this. Hence, this is more acceptable to God than being characterized by what Khawārij and the Muʿtazila describe. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iii) Thirdly, God Most High has said: "[Tell those who disbelieve that] if they desist (from their wrong deeds) that which is past will be forgiven them."[1357] However, since the things through which the act of desisting is realized are unlimited and unknown, it is impossible to reach all the acts of obedience and fulfill all the injunctions, as the Khawārij understand it, because life is too short. Therefore, the "desistance" [mentioned in the verse] would not have taken place, which is the case according to the thought of the Muʿtazila. So, it has been established that this desistance is something that everyone can do at all times, which is to avoid all forms of disbelief and sins, and to believe in God and everything in which one has to believe. *Strength comes from God alone.* This is according to the Muʿtazilī doctrine because they have determined an [intermediate] position between disbelief and belief. On the other hand, God Most High has promised the forgiveness mentioned [in the verse] on the condition of desisting from disbelief. That is why the major sinner must be forgiven; and especially so the [former] disbeliever, if he committed a major sin before he desisted from disbelief. Thus, from the [Muʿtazili] claim that [the divine threat] of eternal torment is general [i.e., it also applies to the believers], there results the rejection of punishment and forgiveness [for them]. *God alone leads to success.*

[1356] Q. 4:115.

[1357] Q. 8:38.

iv) Then, we say to the Muʿtazila: Regarding your statement, "One who commits a major sin is neither named by the name "belief" nor by the name "disbelief", did you not name [the one who commits a major sin] by either of these two names because he does not deserve either? Or does he deserve one of them, but you do not know which one it is?

a) If [the Muʿtazila] adopt the first option, the following is said to them: Did [the sinner] believe in all the tenets of faith, some of them, or did he not believe at all and therefore the name "believer" became invalid? If he accepts the first option, he uttered a grave statement, negated from someone the name of his action and failed to know his Lord because he failed to correctly ascribe the name that He has given to him [i.e., believer]. If that were possible, it would be possible for a righteous person to not be truly righteous in the sight of God. Likewise, it would be impossible for one who is standing, sitting and in a certain state to be like that in the sight of God or for God to know him in such a manner. On this basis are the opposites that we have mentioned [in terms of discrepancy between name and reality]. This is a sign that [the Muʿtazila] are ignorant of God.

b) If [the Muʿtazila] adopt the second option, [they should know that] God has declared that those who believe in some [of the tenets of faith] and disbelieve in others by saying, "We believe in some of them and disbelieve in others",[1358] are disbelievers in reality, so they should be named "disbelievers". This is the view of the Khawārij.

c) If they take the third option, it is far-fetched. For, since God Most High has named one who believes in some of [the tenets of faith] a "disbeliever", one who believes in nothing is more deserving of that. Two pieces of evidence support this principle:

[1358] See Q. 4:150-51.

I) What I have mentioned about God's division of people into two [as believers and disbelievers] regarding their position in this world and the Hereafter. Therefore, the Mu'tazila's division of people into three categories transgresses God's limits. The following ought to be said to such a person: "Has God permitted you, or do you invent a lie concerning God?"[1359] Or, the following is said to them just as it is said to the Jews: "Do you know best, or does God?"[1360]

II) Secondly, God Most High in His definitive (*muḥkam*) revelation negates [belief] from a group upon ascribing disbelief when He says, "They are not believers," and no rational person thought, "Perhaps they are not disbelievers." On the contrary, if belief is negated from one who performs the act of belief, this negation is from disbelief. *Strength comes from God alone.*

v) If [the Mu'tazila in response to the second question we asked at the beginning] say, "We do not know which of the two names [i.e., "believer" and "disbeliever"] is deserved by one who commits a major sin, but God knows it," they will not bother to argue because the things that [the Mu'tazila] do not know are too many to count. A whole life would be wasted if one had to argue with them about [these issues]. *Strength comes from God alone.* Then, despite the differences of opinion among them, the [Muslim] community agreed that the person who committed a major sin had one of the names of the religions, from polytheism, disbelief and Islam. Whoever invalidates [these names] in order to avoid speaking of them with doubt will invalidate that which the Muslim community has agreed upon. They have testified upon the coming of the Book and the Sunna to that which will remove the doubts of those who listen, bear witness and have a heart. *Strength comes from God alone.*

vi) Then, as for the matter of calling one [who has committed a major sin] "wicked" (*fāsiq*)" or "sinful" (*fājir*) in an unrestricted manner, there is disagreement over it. Those who call him a "disbeliever" or a "polytheist" [i.e., the Khawārij] use [the names "wicked" and "sinner" unrestrictedly]. Those who call [one who has committed a major sin] a "believer" [i.e., the People of Monotheism] refuse to do so, similarly rejecting the name

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[1359] Q. 10:59.

[1360] Q. 2:140.

"enemy of God". The Mu'tazila differed from the norm and innovated these two names [i.e., "wicked" and "sinner"] in order to ban the two [former] names [i.e., disbeliever and the polytheist]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

vii) Then, the Khawārij's interpretation of His statement, "God forgives not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him, [but He forgives (all) save that to whom He will,"[1361] as "from mistakes" is false. This is because [the mistake] is not a sin that can be forgiven, whereas forgiveness is mentioned here [in the verse]. Nor is there the possibility that repentance is implicitly stipulated [for forgiveness], since polytheism is also forgiven with repentance. However, the verse is aimed at the distinction [of polytheism] from other sins. Likewise, what is meant by His statement, "If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden, [We will expiate your evil deeds]"[1362] cannot be ["a mistake"] because [the verse] mentions "expiation" (*takfīr*). Yet, without sin there is no expiation. A mistake does not constitute a sin, and expiation obtains for the thing to be punished. It is impossible for the Mu'tazila's [interpretation of this verse] to be correct as their doctrine prevents them from acknowledging the reality of [1363] because [according to them] the is forgiven for one who avoids the major sin. However, s are affirmed [in the verse first], and then comes expiation, whereas [the Mu'tazila] accept s as forgiven, and not expiated. For the forgiven sin is the concealed sin, and it continues until the time it is lifted.[1364] An expiated sin is one the perpetrator of which has performed a good deed that will expiate it. In fact, [the following verses point to the expiated sin]: "God will change their evil deeds to good deeds";[1365] "Shall I show you a commerce... ?";[1366] and, "If you publish your almsgiving, [it is well...]"[1367] Likewise, He says: "Turn unto God with sincere repentance..."[1368] [The verse that forms] the basis of [the expiation of sins is] His statement: "Good deeds annul ill-deeds."[1369]

[1361] Q. 4:48.

[1362] Q. 4:31.

[1363] This word has been read and spelled as *al-shubah* (doubts) in K, 338 and TA, 431. But in the next sentence, the pronoun *hiya* refers to this word and the sentence refers to the verse above. In Q. 4:31, there is the word *sayyi'āt*. Therefore, this word should be *al-sayyi'a*, which is the singular form of *sayyi'āt* and means evil deed or (*Translator*). Further verification can be made by the presence of *al-sayyi'a* as a marginal emendation on MS. 176r (*Editor*).

[1364] Reading *raf'ihā* according to MS. 176r.

[1365] Q. 25:70.

[1366] Q. 61:10.

[1367] Q. 2:271.

viii) Thereupon, the verse [i.e., "If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden, We will expiate your evil deeds and make you enter at a noble gate"[1370]], does not mean what the Mu'tazila say because they consider one who insists on sinning to be a major sinner, whereas one who does not insist on sinning repents of sin and regrets it. This means that sin will be forgiven [only] through repentance. However, all sins are forgiven through [repentance]. Nevertheless, [major and s] are distinguished, as in His words: "God forgives not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him..."[1371] and, "If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden..."[1372] It seems – and God knows best – that polytheism is forgiven only by repenting from it, while other sins may be forgiven by the grace of God or expiated because of other good deeds. Thus, one may adopt a correct approach by accepting the Qur'an's distinction [between major sins and s]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ix) Then, the verse [i.e., "If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden, we will expiate your evil deeds"[1373]] invalidates the view of the Mu'tazila and Khawārij in various aspects:

a) In the verse, He states, "If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden ..."[1374], but the judgment of those who have failed to avoid [them] has not been disclosed.

b) Major sins are of two types:

I) One is major sins in the field of creed, through which the disbelievers differ among themselves, such as different kinds of disbelief and denial.

II) The other is major sins in the field of actions. These sinners avoid these sins in their "creedal aspect" by regarding them as that which God has made grave acts and sins. This is "avoidance" [i.e., in the context of the verse]. On the other hand, one commits these sins in their "active aspect", which is "perpetration". However, the aspect of avoidance [i.e., "creedal" or "active"] is not mentioned in the verse. Therefore, the meaning intended in the verse may be as follows: If one avoids major sins in creed, which are different kinds of polytheism, God expiates sins other than them for whomever He wills, due to one's good deeds and [His own] graciousness. In fact, we have explained this situation as "expiation" in one of the two verses [above] and forgiveness in the other. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1368] Q. 66:8.
[1369] Q. 11:114.
[1370] Q. 4:31.
[1371] Q. 4:116.
[1372] Q. 4:31.
[1373] Q. 4:31.
[1374] Q. 4:31.

c) [In the verses, God] did not clarify the amount of punishment for major sins. As is known, He has declared that He will requite evil deeds only by their equivalent. The equivalent of polytheism and obstinacy is only eternal torment. Surely, the sin of one who does not deny obstinately and does not ascribe partners to God in worship is less than the sin of one who commits these [two crimes]. On the contrary, the correct conviction regarding that [i.e., the matter of divine punishment] has led one to fear what God forbids and to hope for what He encourages in terms of one's creed. This belief is what expiates and erases everything that one goes through. It is impossible for this person's sin to be equal to the sin of the first [i.e., the sin of one who denies due to his obstinacy and arrogance and associates partners with God], so it is impossible that he should stay in Hell forever.

x) Two matters enter into this discussion [if we do not interpret the above verse in the correct manner:]

a) There would be a lie in the promise made in His statement: "Whosoever brings an evil deed will be awarded but the like thereof."[1375] As is known, if the obstinate disbeliever were to be punished with all punishments on the condition that he [finally] will be saved and find comfort, he would tolerate them and choose them. Thus, it has been established that the likeness of his evil is eternal torment. [Conversely] if [God] had punished someone "the like thereof" [i.e., the punishment for disbelief], though his sin was less than that [a major sin], then it would be a requital greater than "the like thereof", which is not punishing according to what one commits. His punishment [should be] according to wisdom, whereas this [i.e., more than appropriate for the sin] is not in conformity with wisdom. *God alone leads to success.*

[1375] Q. 6:160.

b) It is known that requiting someone of denial and obstinacy with the good is greater and loftier than requiting someone who assents to perform what [ought] to be abandoned due to their denial and obstinacy. So, one brings to the one who does good the greatest good and [the one who does evil] what has not reached the utmost limit in terms of evil [i.e., the believing major sinner can receive the reward of Paradise but not be inflicted with Hell forever]. Now, if God inflicts upon this [i.e., the believing major sinner] the eternal torment of Hell, He nullifies the reward of the highest good [i.e., belief] because he has committed the evil [i.e., the "active" major sin] that is less than it in degree. This does not amount to justice, but to injustice. Justice requires making the reward of the good that the servant has done more than the punishment for the evil he has committed. In fact, God, exalted is His praise, has announced that He will reward the good deeds tenfold and punish the evil ones the like thereof. However, [inflicting eternal torment] in return for [a major sin] not only fails to reward good deeds with the like thereof but does not confine itself to the like thereof in punishing evil. God is exalted above such a thing.

It is impossible and baseless to consider the servant's abandonment of what he should have done as evidence that he is a liar and disbeliever in the first instance. This is because in everyone's intellect is a necessity to avoid lying, just as there is a perpetuity in one's assent [i.e., performing a sinful action does not nullify one's belief]. Then, the servant's abandonment of the deed he should have done is not evidence of the lying of his intellect because one's intellect informs that the abandonment should not have happened. When the servant transgresses, the intellect continues in assent at the time of transgression. If one's abandonment of the act had been clear evidence of his lying, everything that was lawful earlier should have been corrupt and forbidden. Again, if such had been the case, the apostate should not have been different from the one who was a disbeliever from the beginning. On the contrary, when he reveals his disbelief, it does not follow that he was a liar at first. Therefore, how can it be concluded that the servant was a liar in the beginning due to his deed? So, if the Muslim [had been a liar from the very beginning] because of [his sin], it would have been revealed that a disbeliever was a liar in his previous disbelief [and thus it would have been concluded that he was a believer from the very outset], because he later believed and committed acts that were not ugly according to custom.

There are two grounds for [our argument]:

I) If it had turned out that one was a liar at first [and never believed in the obligatory nature of that deed because of abandoning the action he should do], the requirement [to stay away from lying from the very beginning] would have disappeared. If this requirement had disappeared, abandoning the act would not have been a means to indicate that he was lying [and in fact never believed in the obligatory nature of that deed]. This shows that what they say is false. *Strength comes from God alone.*

II) From his own experience, everyone knows that he is not a liar at the time of his belief. Then, one who transgresses in his religion also knows this. If one's transgression is considered as evidence [for his lying], no knowledge will be realized truly. *Strength comes from God alone.* On the contrary, it follows that the one who makes this claim [is a liar] because that person does not lie in his belief. However, every believer knows that he is lying in this statement. Likewise, God, exalted is He, knows the reality of everything not depending on another but based on the state in which that thing is. So, He knows that person was truthful in the beginning even if he later transgressed [and sinned]. Thus, the owner of this view becomes a liar in the sight of God and in the sight of those who testify that he is a liar. Thus, in his statement in which he is trying to prove the disbelief of others, he requires everyone to judge him by disbelief. *Strength comes from God alone.*

If the [following] statement of God Most High involved any meanings that would support what they have said [i.e., the claim that major sin expels from belief], belief would never obtain for [the Muslims]: "Those who believe, then disbelieve and then (again) believe, then disbelieve, [and then increase in disbelief, God will never pardon them, nor will He guide them unto a way]."[1376] Thus, it has been established that their doctrine has no grounds. If this is the case with them in relation to disbelief, what is the case in relation to lesser matters? *Strength comes from God alone.* So, people's states being different does not require the invalidity of their opposites in other than these states.[1377] *God alone leads to success.* This [principle] also binds the Mu'tazila in their position vis-à-vis the major sins.

[1376] Q. 4:137.

xi) Then, it is astounding that [the Mu'tazila and Khawārij] ascribe the name "People of Prayer and the Qibla" to those who have committed major sins. The reason for this name to be attributed to them is belief. Hence, it is impossible for [this name] to remain once [the belief] has gone away and the reason for its existence has disappeared. *God knows best.*

xii) The following [variant] recitation has been narrated: "If you avoid the major sin (*kabīr*), which you are forbidden..."[1378] even though ["the major sins"] is well known. It is possible that the singular sense may be meant with the plural form. So, we do not deny that the verse may be in a singular sense [in which case the major sin would be exclusively disbelief and polytheism]. The following verses support our understanding: "Whosoever denies the faith ...";[1379] "And whosoever seeks as religion other than the Surrender (to God) ...";[1380] "And if any of you turn back from their faith..."[1381] Hence, the verse, "God forgives not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him"[1382] is understood on this basis. Then, God says: "He forgives anything else to whom He wills."[1383] He also said in this matter: "We will expiate your evil deeds."[1384] Therefore, all these verses express a single verdict. As is known, the Mu'tazila and the Khawārij have no grasp of one or the other.[1385]

xiii) Then, the principle is that His statement: "If you avoid major sins, which you are forbidden, we will expiate your evil deeds"[1386], according to the understanding of the Khawārij it is as if it says, "If you avoid disbelief and polytheism", and according to the understanding of the Mu'tazila, it is as if it says "If you avoid abandoning the faith, we will expiate the mentioned thing for you." Hence, according to these two groups, there is no major sin other than abandoning faith. In this case, the verse is related to a specific thing in their opinion, which is what takes one out of religion and the faith. However, this understanding invalidates their claim that the verses are general and compels them to accept that the verses are specific [i.e., the verses mean disbelief and polytheism exclusively by the term "major sins"]. Yet whoever judges in favor of one thing over another without explanation acts arbitrarily. In this matter it is necessary to adhere to al-Ḥusayn [al-Najjār]'s doctrine of suspending judgment in all the [scriptural texts] expressing a divine threat and to negate the doctrine that has been mentioned [i.e., of the Khawārij and Mu'tazila]. *God knows best.*

[1377] The intention seems to be that performing a major sin, which is an evil deed of the body, does not invalidate the goodness of belief remaining in one's heart.

[1378] Q. 4:31.

[1379] Q. 5:5.

[1380] Q. 3:85.

[1381] Q. 2:217.

[1382] Q. 4:48.

[1383] Q. 4:48.

[1384] Q. 4:31.

[1385] That is, no grasp of belief and disbelief, or perhaps sin and disbelief.

[1386] Q. 4:31.

xiv) Then, [another] principle is as follows: God made promises for many good deeds, but He did not mention avoiding major sins as a condition for [achieving these promises]. On the other hand, He made [general] threats for many evil deeds, just as He made general promises for good deeds. If one takes both verses in general terms, one is forced into contradiction by gathering the two issues together in one subject, which is a sign of folly.[1387]

xv) Then, the views put forward about that [i.e., about the generality of the verses] have been contradictory. The Mu'tazila and Khawāriji claimed that the verses of divine threat are more worthy of being [taken as general about the major sins] because this approach is more effective in terms of warning and giving admonition. The Murji'a, on the other hand, say that the verses of divine promise are more worthy of being general because the promise is more worthy of God's known attributes of mercy, pardon and forgiveness, and therefore these attributes abolish both major sins and s. In addition, His statement testifies to this: "God forgives not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him."[1388] Again, the divine threat of torment may be directed at those who consider their sins lawful. If the divine promise needs to be specified, this requires external evidence. On the other hand, the divine threat must be specified on its own terms.[1389] Also, for the divine threat to be fulfilled, the sin must be continuous, which is a sign of specificity [and not generality]. However, this [i.e., the condition of continuity] does not exist in the divine promise. Therefore, the divine threat must be directed at those who commit a sin by considering it lawful. Or the divine threat corresponds to the sin of the servant when he has no good along with his sin, so it is necessary to requite him. Or, although [the threatened torment] is the punishment for that sin, God may show grace by pardoning that sin because He knows that [the sinning servant] hopes for His mercy and knows the greatness of His forgiveness. Thus, He does not deprive [His servant] of [His mercy and forgiveness], for His grace and benevolence, which inspire [the servant] to hope, have become manifest. *Strength comes from God alone.* Or the good servants of God intercede for the sinners, and He accepts their request for forgiveness on behalf [of the sinners] because He renders the request for forgiveness from [the sinful believers. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1387] That is, when we say, "One who does good deeds goes to Paradise" and "One who does evil deeds goes to Hell", if we take both propositions in absolute terms, a contradiction arises because the one who does good may also do evil, and the one who does evil may also do good. (*Translator*).

[1388] Q. 4:48, 4:116.

xvi) Then, [another] principle in this matter is that God Most High gave the name “belief” to the servant before he committed a sin, and removed the title “disbelief” from him, by His words, “Say (O Muslims): We believe in God…”[1390] and, “The messenger believes…”[1391] Thus, [God] has explained that through which one is a believer and has forbidden him to say, “You are not a believer” to someone like himself, by the following [verse]: “Say not unto one who offers you peace: “You are not a believer.””[1392] Again, when Gabriel asked the Messenger of God about belief, [the latter] explained it and attributed the name “believer” to the former because of his belief in the tenets of faith in question.[1393] Likewise, he said, “I have been commanded to fight people [until they say “There is no god but God and Muḥammad is His messenger”, and until they pray and pay almsgivings].”[1394]

[1389] In other words, the verses of the promise are general in themselves, but they may be specified through other verses, whereas the verses that express divine threat are specific in themselves.

[1390] Q. 2:136.

[1391] Q. 2:285.

[1392] Q. 4:94.

[1393] For the famous Hadith of Gabriel, see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-Īmān*, 37, *al-Tafsīr*, 31; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-Īmān*, 1.

[1394] For the hadith, see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-Īmān*, 17; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-Īmān*, 8.

So, this one [who believes in the tenets stated in the verses and hadiths] is a believer according to the Book, the Sunna, the consensus of the community, and the testimony of linguists. Then, there has been disagreement about the one who committed a major sin. One who has this quality maintains [his in-between religious status like a disbeliever] because of the stubbornness of the Mu'tazila and the obstinacy of the Khawārij. In fact, this status should be attributed to these two groups [i.e., the Mu'tazila and the Khawārij] because they preferred this status for themselves and despaired of God's mercy, never thinking that God could forgive them as per His wisdom. *Strength comes from God alone.*

xvii) Then, the meanings of sin, disobedience and injustice are not the opposite of belief [such that one who is characterized by these is not automatically characterized by disbelief, which is the opposite of belief]. For the term sinfulness means abandoning the command and may be divided into three parts:

a) To abandon [i.e., fail to observe] the command that is meant to show the right path.

b) To abandon the obligatory command.

c) To abandon the creedal [command]. Similar is the case with injustice because it is a name for putting something out of its proper place. Disobedience is for opposing. Now, whoever places all [these three acts on a par with each other] in terms of punishment or literal meaning and considers belief to be invalidated by any of them, he has wronged himself. He has attempted to abolish the distinction made by God, His Messenger, and the imams [i.e., the scholars]. *Strength comes from God alone.* We have already explained what belief means [So, there is no need to repeat it here].

[7.3. A Critique of al-Kaʿbī's Views on Major Sin]

Then, let us mention some of the doctrines al-Kaʿbī chose and was pleased with for his sect, and then mention his argument for these views. If one ponders over [these arguments], one will see al-Kaʿbī's level of understanding in the religion of God. *Strength comes from God alone.*

1) Al-Kaʿbī claims that the view of the People of Truth is as follows: Every obedience is from belief. The name "belief" is deserved by

committing [acts] the abandonment of which requires the name "sinfulness". [Al-Kaʿbī] goes on to say: Our word "believer" is not just a noun derived from the verb because not everyone who confirms, obeys and surrenders to someone is given the name "believer" unrestrictedly. Again, "believer" is not just a label, because if it were, one who does not actually believe could be named a "believer", just as a beautiful woman may be named "ugly". Since such is not the case [with the name "believer"], it has been established that it derives [both] from [its] verb and from praise in religion, and it is a label for distinction.

i) The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: We say, and help may be sought from God alone: [al-Kaʿbī's] statement, "[This is the opinion of] the People of Truth," is true if the phrase, "Every obedience is from belief" means that [every act of obedience] comes from belief. This is similar to the expression, "Every blessing is from God", which means that every blessing is obtained and originates [from Him]. The same is true for belief.[1395] As for [al-Kaʿbī's] statement, "The name "belief" is deserved by…." he contradicts his own words. For he claims that one who commits a major sin [has good] deeds, but he cannot be given the name ["believer"] and is described as has already been mentioned on this topic. That [negation] is for applying the name "believer", not the name "belief" because [al-Kaʿbī] accepts that [good deeds] may exist [without a "believer"] and avoids naming [one in this way]. This is the level of his knowledge as seen from his own words.

ii) [Al-Kaʿbī's] statement, ""Believer" is not a noun derived from its verb" is astonishing because he attributes that name [i.e., "belief"] to one's action, but prevents naming him with it [i.e., as "believer"]. This requires that everyone may be [named] by a name other than the action they actually perform and prevents naming them by it. This requires too that the name of everyone who does a job should be given to one who does not do it, and the name of one who does not do a job should be given to one who does it. This also applies to motion and the like.[1396] As for [al-Kaʿbī's] statement,

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[1395] Just as the expression, "Every blessing is from God" does not mean that every blessing is part of God, so the expression, "Every obedience is from belief" should not mean that obedience and good deeds are understood as part of belief, as al-Kaʿbī holds. (*Translator*).

[1396] This seems to refer to al-Kaʿbī's concept nominalism. See under 2.12.2.

"One who confirms something is not named by belief," afterwards he said: "The People of the Religion [i.e., the Muslims] have agreed on considering the one who does so to be wrong." This statement is false in two ways:

a) [Al-Kaʿbī] said, "He is not named [a "believer"] unrestrictedly". On the contrary, he is named a "believer" [unrestrictedly], but what is meant by that belief [i.e., in what he believes] is not known, so it needs to be explained. However, this is not because ["believer"] is not his name. Likewise, it cannot be said about someone that, "He obeyed so-and-so" unrestrictedly when he obeyed someone without knowing the intent. However, this is not because he does not deserve to be named by the act of obedience. Rather, it is an obedience for which the matter is not known. Such is the case with belief. If what is meant by it is known, then it must be said. Likewise, it cannot be said that someone is confirming or denying in relation to another until there is an explanation of [what they deny]. Then, as for all those who deny God, they are named "deniers", because the truth of the denial [i.e., what they deny] is known. The same holds true of the believer. *God alone leads to success.*

b) Likewise, al-Kaʿbī's narration from the People of the Religion is [a lie]. What is surprising about [al-Kaʿbī] is that he constantly narrates in this book on the Muslim community views that it is difficult for perhaps one person to adopt, let alone the entire community. He exploits that [claim about the community] as a pretext for his false doctrine. It is as if he feels safe from the reflection of someone with intelligence or anyone who will dispute him in his teachings. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iii) [Al-Kaʿbī's] statement. "The name "believer" is not just a label for someone" is answered as follows: If the name given to one did not express that the action it signifies exists in that person, one could not prevent it from being seen as a label. However, regarding it [as a label] creates uncertainty as to whether one is named by it as a label or by the reality of one's action. The same holds true of the names derived from verbs when they are labels that are not used literally but rather metaphorically to mock them. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iv) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] said: As for the sinner, in reality we do not say, "He is not a believer". On the contrary, we just avoid naming him a "believer".

Now [al-Kaʿbī] is asked: Is the sinner really a believer or not a believer, or neither a believer nor a disbeliever? If he says, ["He is a believer"], [al-Kaʿbī] becomes a man who calls on himself to belie himself over a thing about which he is not lying. So, he obeys himself [i.e., and belies himself by telling the truth that the sinner is a believer]. Thus, the treatment his ilk deserves is to pay no attention to him, because he is inferior to every imitator. If [al-Kaʿbī] adopts the other two options, he will be calling himself a liar in what he reports from himself. *God alone leads to success.*

2) Then, as evidence for naming all acts of obedience "belief", al-Kaʿbī cites the notion that [acts of obedience] are "from the religion" [i.e., parts of it] in everyone's eyes, as well as His statement: "Whoso seeks as religion other than Islam..."[1397] However, we have shown that those who hold on to this verse are far from its true meaning. In addition, there is no doubt that if one adopts anything from the ritual worship upon invitation to do so without conviction of Islam as a religion, it is not accepted from him. Every act of worship is accepted only along with the religion of Islam. Thus, it has been established that it [i.e., belief][1398] is the name of a certain worship by which every worship is accepted, and in the absence of which all worship is rejected. This is the meaning of the phrase, "Everything comes from the religion." Not everything that is attributed to a thing by way of being from it needs to have its name. God Most High says: "And whatever of comfort you enjoy, it is from God",[1399] not that [the blessings] are [God Himself]. On the contrary, there is in this [verse] evidence for the otherness of religion, so that it can be ascribed to [the person]. So, ["religion", i.e., "belief"] is established in him after its absence from him.[1400] *God alone leads to success.*

[1397] Q. 3:85.

[1398] Kholeif read the pronoun as the masculine "*innahu*", which I think correctly points to the action of belief. See K, 345. Topaloğlu and Aruçi, on the other hand, thought that it should take the feminine "*innahā*"; see TA, 440. They stated in n. 10 that the pronoun probably refers to the action of obedience (*ṭāʿa*) (*Translator*).

[1399] Q. 16:53.

[1400] Al-Māturīdī holds that it is "belief" in the sense of internal conviction or assent that must enter into a person after it was not present, in order for their external acts of worship to be accepted. This is a crucial point of dispute with al-Kaʿbī who holds that because all acts of obedience are "from the religion", they can be termed belief, such that one is not named "believer" if they are not present. To prove his own case al-Māturīdī uses the expression, "Everything comes from the religion" and parallels it to the idea, drawn from Q. 16:53 that, "Blessings come from God". Evidently, what

Then, [al-Ka'bī] argued using the verse, "And announce unto the believers the good tidings that they will have great bounty from God"[1401] and similar promises made to the believers with the unrestricted name "believer". Then, [this promise] does not hold for one who commits [a major] sin. Even though there has been disagreement over the generality of the divine threat of torment, a consensus has been established on the generality of the promise.[1402]

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: We say, and God alone leads to success: [Al-Ka'bī's] claim of consensus on the generality of the verses of promise is a lie. He has made it a habit to resort to [this lie of consensus] every time he is faced with hardship. God has said, "God has rewarded them with Paradise for what they said..."[1403] However, such a reward for uttering these words is not necessary on specific grounds, according to everyone.[1404] So, it has been proven that [al-Ka'bī's] story [of consensus] is a lie.

Then, [al Ka'bī]'s attempt to use the verses [of promise] as evidence may be countered in three ways:

i) The verses may have pointed to the ultimate end of the states, which is the place where every believer will return [i.e., Paradise].[1405]

ii) The promise may be made for those who have actualized their belief along with its morality and what belief indicates. One may be named by a thing that is a name for a group, taking account of its connection with all the members of the group. Again, one may be named only by considering that name without considering the members of the group. *God knows best.*

iii) [The promise of Paradise mentioned in the verse] may be a reward for [the servant]. As for punishment, one is punished with what he deserves.

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is meant is not that blessings "are" God. They are rather "other" than Him, and this same sense of "otherness" (*ghayriyya*) is established with regard to "acts of obedience" as coming "from religion" in the sense of its true core, "belief".

[1401] Q. 33:47.

[1402] If the promise of Paradise for believers is general, it can receive specification in the case of major sinners, according to al-Ka'bī.

[1403] Q. 5:85.

[1404] Al-Māturīdī's point seems to be that these words, which are a promise, are directed towards particular Christians in Q. 5:82. All promises are not thereby general as al-Ka'bī claims.

[1405] That is, even if a major sin can specify a verse such that a person does not immediately go to Paradise, this remains their ultimate destination.

The punishment earned by the servant due to his religion does not diminish [the reward] he earned due to his religion. In addition, God has explained that He will give [the servant] a great bounty, so that the servant may know that the reward given by God for the good deeds he has performed is kindness. As for the wisdom regarding God's bestowal of grace, it depends on whoever He establishes in that with His choice of states and times.

3) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] targeted one of the doctrines ascribed to the Murji'a to criticize them. However, if one who knows their teachings examines the statement he has made, he will know that it is a lie. However, since I do not find his explanation very useful, and since it is a lie, I do not quote it here. Then, [al-Kaʿbī] said: "There is a unanimous agreement among the People of Deferral [i.e., the Murji'a], except for the opposition of one, that if a major sinner dies without repentance, then the divine threat of torment will hold for him. The one referred to [in the Scripture] may or may not be such a person.[1406] Muqātil[1407] says that this person is without doubt from the People of the Promise. However, one does not abandon the consensus that he is not a believer due to the like of [Muqātil]." It is said to him [i.e., al-Kaʿbī]: If it is as you have mentioned, then what you have claimed has been established. Yet since the doctrine from them is the opposite of what you have conveyed, what you have claimed is baseless. Then, most of those who adopt the doctrine of "deferral" (i.e., deferring the verdict about the major sinners to God) reject the divine threat for those who do not consider sin to be lawful, and this view is famous among them. So, this clarifies our claim that al-Kaʿbī has lied in reporting the consensus. *God knows best.*

Then, al-Kaʿbī multiplied the questions that will not be asked and gave answers that even one with the smallest understanding would not accept. So, I have left them because I do not see much benefit in mentioning them. *God alone leads to success.*

4) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] claimed that abandoning s is [part] of belief because one would be punished for them if he does not stay away from major sins. In this case, he is asked: If it is necessary that [abandoning s] is [part] of belief when carrying out major sins, then why is one punished for the

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[1406] See Q. 25:68-70.

[1407] Likely a reference to the early exegete Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767). Muqātil is clearly the sole exception mentioned earlier in the passage.

opposite of that [i.e., not abandoning s when not carrying out major sins], and why does one not have belief when one abandons [major sins, merely due to not leaving s?] That is the utmost limit of perplexity.

Then, [al-Kaʿbī] cited as evidence the impermissibility according to the Muslim community of asking for forgiveness for a sinner. In this case, he is asked: What do you mean by sinner (*fājir*): the disbeliever, or the one who commits a major sin in a state of belief, without considering it lawful? If he says [that by sinner he means a disbeliever], he departs from the path of moderation [because that is not the meaning of sinner]. If he adopts the second option, he slanders the Muslim community and makes this option evidence for the fact that [the sinner] deserves to remain in Hell eternally because of what came from his own act. Thus, [al-Kaʿbī] gives to [the sinner] what he is tested with in himself.

Then, the following two criticisms may be leveled at [al-Kaʿbī]:

i) [Criticising him for] unrestricted use of the name ["sinner"] due to a single incidence of sin, which is a state in him and not the [continual] act of sin. However, the unrestricted name of "belief" is permissible, as [belief] is present in the servant, and he has the reality of its act according to tradition and reason together. Conversely, naming by sinfulness is impermissible unless sinfulness is manifest, whereas this is permissible through the declaration of the Qur'an and the consensus of linguists. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) [Al-Kaʿbī] made the prophets' and saints' request for the forgiveness of sinners refer to those who have already been forgiven.[1408] This is to hide the blessing of forgiveness and to turn away from gratitude in the context of its due right. This is a far-fetched and unacceptable result. *God alone leads to success.*

5) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] took the verse regarding the allegation of adultery as evidence that God has declared those [who committed the slander of adultery] to be cursed without making any distinction between those who

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[1408] This is because either the sinners have stayed away from major sins, so their s are automatically forgiven, or they have fallen into major sins, in which case nothing but their own repentance can help them.

did so without considering it lawful and the others.[1409] And it is impossible for someone cursed to be a believer.

[In response to al-Kaʿbī], we say, and God alone leads to success: In the verse, there is [a conditional meaning that] "God's curse is upon him if he slanders"; otherwise, it is not the case that God named that person "cursed" in [the verse]. However, the first point that draws attention in your justification is that you lie about the Qur'an. How do you make the curse necessary by His statement: "[that the curse of God is upon him] if he was among the liars"[1410] and you do not consider the name "belief", even though [God] says and affirms it?[1411]

Again, [God] directed one of the two curses to the divinely mandated punishment (*ḥadd*), so the same is the case for the other one.[1412] In addition, verses about the slander of adultery were revealed about the hypocrites, as has been clarified by His statement, "They are verily liars in the sight of God."[1413] On the other hand, not everyone who alleges adultery is a liar [i.e., they may be correct in the accusation]. The point is that whoever dares to utter these words [i.e., words of slander] and underestimates God's detestation and curse, it will fall upon him.

The principle is that [the term] *laʿn* [the root of "curse" (*laʿna*)] means to banish. Not everyone has been banished [from God's mercy] because he has sinned. One who has been punished as much as he deserves is not named ["cursed"], and not everyone who is told, "May God curse him" deserves the curse.[1414] If there is one who deserves the curse of God, one who most deserves it is one [i.e., al-Kaʿbī] who defends this doctrine because it is known that he has sinned and visited unjust rulers.[1415] All this is due to his sect mandating that the curse is literal, whereas what is in the verse is the mentioning of cursing not the reality of its occurrence.[1416] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1409] See Q. 24:23: "Lo! as for those who traduce virtuous, believing women (who are) careless, cursed are they in the world and the Hereafter. Theirs will be an awful doom."

[1410] Q. 24:7.

[1411] Q. 24:12 makes clear that it was "believers" that carried out slander in the incident referenced in the Qur'an.

[1412] Either the accusation is proven, so the punishment for adultery is given or it is not proven, so the punishment for slander is given instead.

[1413] Q. 24:13.

[1414] The person who is punished as much as they deserve is a person who does not come under the qualification of "lying" in the context of accusations of adultery and fornication. If someone is told, "May God curse him" yet does not deserve it, then that must refer to a curse made in ordinary speech, rather than God's expression of cursing in the Qur'an.

6) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] cited as evidence for failing to observe the divine limits [i.e., as leading to eternal punishment for sin] the following verse: "And whoso disobeys God and His messenger [and transgresses His limits, He will make him enter Fire, where he will dwell for ever; his will be a shameful doom]."[1417] But, in the verse, the eternal torment of Hell is mentioned for [transgressing limits] without mentioning whether this sin is minor or major.[1418] If this verse is taken as subject to interpretation [i.e., if it is taken in the sense of committing a major sin without considering it lawful], then those [above regarding the slander of adultery] should also be taken [as subject to interpretation, i.e., those who commit that sin should not be considered disbelievers]. Also, God the Almighty has similarly said, "Whoso judges not by that which God has revealed: such are disbelievers."[1419] The sin mentioned in this verse is also failure to observe the limits, but [al-Kaʿbī] rejects this and interprets the verse in the sense of considering

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[1415] The phrase is *yakhtalifu ilā al-aʾimma al-jāʾira*. This provides a fascinating glimpse at a political dimension to al-Māturīdī's rivalry with al-Kaʿbī. The latter figure is known to have taken up a position as a minister at the court of the governor of Balkh, receiving a generous stipend with which he was able to retire in comfort. See Rudolph, Hansberger and Adamson (eds.), *Philosophy in the Islamic World*, 237-38. Al-Māturīdī, on the other hand, is reported to have declared: "The one who says that the sultan in our time acts justly has committed an act of disbelief, because we know that they work injustice; and whoever makes injustice into justice disbelieves (*man qāla al-sulṭān fī zamāninā ʿādil yakfiru li-annā naʿlamu annahum yaẓlimūn wa-man jaʿala al-ẓulma ʿadlan yakfiru*)." See Bernand, "Le Mukhtaṣar fī bayān al-iʿtiqād," 26. Though his rationale for the judgment of disbelief is based on a rejection, as he sees it, of the justice that acts as the moral foundation for the Law, the certainty with which he declares the iniquity of the Samanid rulers of his age is stark.

[1416] As mentioned above, the literally cursed person may be someone who considers slander to be lawful or a hypocrite, but not a believer. Therefore, the use of the term in the Qur'an has an exhortative dimension when used among the believers, and this is undermined by al-Kaʿbī's literalism. For discussion on moral aspects of the legislation surrounding this kind of slander in the Qur'an, see Harvey, *The Qur'an and the Just Society*, 188-90.

[1417] Q. 4:14.

[1418] For al-Māturīdī, only the special major sin of unrepentant disbelief can warrant this level of punishment.

[1419] Q. 5:44.

the sin to be lawful. Then, such is the case with [the verse] he mentioned [i.e., the verse "Whoever disobeys God and His Messenger..."[1420]] The same holds true of the things that [al-Kaʿbī] said while citing as evidence His statement, "They missed prayers [and followed desires]..."[1421] However, God added [elsewhere], "But if they repent and establish prayer... "[1422] The brotherhood and leaving the [polytheists free to go on their way] that have been mentioned in the Qur'an are valid, not through action, but through acceptance [and belief].[1423] Likewise, missing the prayer [and, as a result, abandoning belief] is not by delaying the prayer, but by rejecting it. *Strength comes from God alone.*

God Most High says: "And those who believed but did not leave their homes, you have no duty to protect them [till they leave their homes]";[1424] "Say not unto one who offers you peace: "You are not a believer"".[1425] Thus, it has been established that what [al-Kaʿbī] said [i.e., major sins] did not wipe out belief nor its name. *God knows best.*

Again, [al-Kaʿbī] used as evidence His words, "But if they repent and establish prayer..."[1426] However, we have explained that this verse is about accepting [the obligatory nature of prayer] because if the action were to be awaited, brotherhood would never be realized, and the polytheists would never be left free to go on their way. This requires the effort of a year, which is pointless.[1427] We have also explained the matter of emigration (*hijra*): it is one of the obligatory acts in which there is a severe divine threat to those who do not fulfill it. Even when the emigration was not fulfilled, God affirmed the name "belief" [i.e., He still named those who did not emigrate "believers".] *God knows best.*

[1420] Q. 4:14. Al-Māturīdī's point in this passage is al-Kaʿbī's inconsistency in interpretation of the Qur'an. If he takes Q. 4:14 as one sinning without considering it lawful (hence justifying his position that major sins lead to eternal punishment), then he should understand Q. 5:44 in the same way. But he does not, because he wants to construe the latter as fully fledged disbelief.

[1421] Q. 19:59. See the exceptive clause in Q. 19:60: "Save him who shall repent and believe and do right..." This is not cited by al-Māturīdī.

[1422] Q. 9:5 and 9:11.

[1423] This refers to the consequence of the polytheists repenting, establishing prayer and paying the due alms: in Q. 9:11: "...then they are your brothers in religion" and Q. 9:5: "...then leave them free to go on their way".

[1424] Q. 8:72.

[1425] Q. 4:94.

[1426] Q. 9:5 and 9:11.

[1427] The mention of "a year" (*ḥawl*) likely refers to the paying of due alms, which takes one year of possessing wealth to become obligatory.

7) Again, [al-Ka'bī] cited as evidence His statement, "Whosoever slays a believer on purpose, [his reward is Hell forever]"[1428] and, "O believers, squander not your wealth among yourselves in vanity..."[1429] as well as what is mentioned about devouring the wealth of orphans wrongfully.[1430]

i) As for the willful murder, there are three aspects to it:

a) [The threat of eternal torment of Hell in the verse] is about one who has killed [another believer] willfully on account of his [i.e., the slain believer's] religion. This is [not] one of the manners of accidental killing.[1431] *God knows best.*

b) [The eternal torment of Hell in the verse] is the [deserved] punishment [of the servant]. But it is for God to show grace to him, grant him forgiveness and accept his good deeds. *Strength comes from God alone.*

c) [The eternal torment of Hell] in the verse pertains to the disbelievers, which is evidenced by the stories about [the reason of the revelation of related verses]. Then, the proof of what we have explained [i.e., that the willful murderer is a believer] is this verse: "O you who believe! Retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the murdered..."[1432] God makes [retaliation] obligatory on the murderers if they kill willfully and retains the name "belief" for them even after they commit the act of murder. Then, [God] maintains the name "brotherhood" [for murderers] by saying, "And for him who is forgiven somewhat by his (injured) brother, prosecution according to usage and payment unto him in kindness..."[1433] Then, by saying, "This is an alleviation and a mercy from your Lord,"[1434] He encourages the murderer to hope for His mercy, Majestic and Sublime. When all this is taken into account, it is far-fetched that [the murderer] will stay in Hell forever. Then, the Mu'tazila considered it necessary to apply the penalty of retaliation to the murderer after he repented, saying that he would be saved from the punishment of the Hereafter [upon his death], and taking the verse to mean that the murderer left belief, even though [the verse] attributes belief to the murderer, which is an act of specification (*takhṣīṣ*) [in regard to the related verse].

[1428] Q. 4:93.

[1429] Q. 4:29-30.

[1430] Q. 4:10.

[1431] It seems necessary to read a missing negation into this sentence to make sense of the option. This can be confirmed by al-Māturīdī's exegetical treatment of Q. 4:93: "He kills him willfully on account of his religion, without being mistaken or ignorant. Rather, he knows that [he is doing] it, and he is intentional about it. Whoever has this quality is a disbeliever and the threat that He mentions in His Noble Book is mandatory for him, unless he renews his belief, for indeed God Most High accepts his belief and repentance." Al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt al-qur'ān*, 3:421. The reasoning is clearly that the act of belief is incompatible with the intention to kill someone for no other reason than they are a Muslim, rather than the action of killing in its own right, which is a major sin.

[1432] Q. 2:178.

ii) As for [al-Ka'bī's] citing the squandering of wealth in vanity [as mentioned in the verse]:

a) Everyone agrees on its specification [i.e., of its general language], as that is a name which has a narrow scope [i.e., those who are to be so severely punished] and it is not what is meant here. So it is with the wealth of orphans [i.e., those who devour the wealth of orphans are certain people, not everyone].

b) Secondly, He used the phrase, "through aggression and injustice" in the verse.[1435] Here, aggression is related to the limit set by Him, while injustice is associated with the owner of the wealth. Moreover, what we have said about these two [i.e., aggression and injustice], applies to murder.

Then, [al-Ka'bī] is asked: Belief is mentioned in the verse; do you remove or retain it? [i.e., according to you, will those who devour the wealth of others and orphans abandon their belief or not?] If [al-Ka'bī] removes belief, he accepts that the verse has been subject to specification. If he retains belief, he will return to the opinion of those to whom he ascribes deferral (*irjā'*). *God alone leads to success.*

8) Then, [al-Ka'bī] said: If one says, "I will test the Messenger of God to find out whether he is really the Messenger of God, and after learning this, I will follow him" and learns that he is truthful, he will not be a believer

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[1433] Q. 2:178.
[1434] Q. 2:178.
[1435] Q. 4:30.

through this knowledge. This shows that unrestricted usage of the name "believer" [i.e., in a theological context] is not the same as in [ordinary] language.

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: We say, and God alone leads to success: How ignorant [al-Kaʿbī] is when he affirms the name ["believer"] in language, [and denies it in theology]. It is as if he said: The language allows unrestricted use of the name "believer", but I prevent it. Hence, he belies himself according to everyone who knows that someone is named [a "believer"]. In addition, this [irrational] approach [of al-Kaʿbī] requires the following situation: God has prevented [believers] from acting on what He taught them and has made it necessary for them to act on what He has made them ignorant thereof. God is exalted above such a description! Then, "knowledge" is not belief, but it is metaphorically named ["belief"], just as His benevolence and mercy are named so, because knowledge calls to assent. Everything [al-Kaʿbī] says is a meaningless dream. *Strength comes from God alone.*

9) Then, [al-Kaʿbī] presents the following proof that the name "belief" cannot be applied [to those who have committed major sins]: God has designated certain rulings as "belief", but has prohibited these rulings from him [i.e., from a major sinner]. And [He has designated other] rulings as "disbelief" for those associated with [major sin].

Let us ask [al-Kaʿbī]: What is the evidence that the rulings that you have pointed out have been designated rather than meanings connected to them in both aspects [i.e., belief and disbelief]?[1436] Then, [al-Kaʿbī] said: Some of these rulings are the following: honoring, purifying, allying, and accepting testimony. In this case, the following is said to [al-Kaʿbī]: What is the sign that all [of these rulings] are due to designating the name "belief" to them specifically, rather than realizing [the rulings] through the conditions connected to them and the acts of worship to which "belief" calls?[1437]

[1436] In other words, why do belief and disbelief follow a set of associated external rulings rather than vice versa?

[1437] The debate seems to be as follows. Al-Kaʿbī starts off with the fact that certain external rulings of the Law are associated with belief and uses that to say that these rulings are the condition for that belief. Al-Māturīdī starts with an idea of belief as an internal conviction or assent, which becomes the condition for a given ruling. For example, al-Kaʿbī would say that only someone who observes the ritual prayer can be designated with belief, whereas al-Māturīdī would say that only someone who is des-

10) Then, the servant receives friendship [i.e., alliance from other believers and political authority] because of his belief, and all the rulings [applied to disbelievers such as slaying and charging jizya] are prevented from him because he has belief. For the existence of belief in the servant has prevented us from applying the above-mentioned rulings to him. In addition, the mandated (*hadd*) and retaliatory (*qiṣāṣ*) punishments applied to the servant prove he possesses this alliance. To testify that he is a believer because [of his belief] and all other things that have been mentioned is required, his repentance is accepted, and the mandated punishment is imposed upon him. Since he is forgiven from God's punishment [i.e., the promise of Paradise not the threat of Hell is applied to him], no one may negate the title "belief" from him. On the contrary, all these are as [the Prophet] said, may God bless him and grant him peace: "They are protected from me in their blood and wealth, except for the rights attached to them."[1438] *Strength comes from God alone.*

The following verse supports our view: "And let not pity for the twain withhold you from obedience to God."[1439] In other words, if the belief had left from the adulterer, one who imposed the punishment of adultery on him would not have had pity on him. Rather the pity [associated with common] belief is such that it can almost lead to abandoning the mandated punishment. So, God warns against it. This is supported by the fact that [the adulterer will not be punished] if he repents.[1440] *Strength comes from God alone.* In addition, the establishment of the mandated punishment is required by mercy because this punishment expiates and erases [the sin]. However, the principle is that punishments given for disbelief do not cleanse one; on the contrary, they consign him to eternal torment. As God says: "[Because of their sins] they were drowned, then made to enter fire."[1441] The mandated and retaliatory punishments have been made atonement [for sins]. So, [the punishments] have been made like this because belief remains with the sinner. *God knows best.*

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ignated with belief can perform the ritual prayer. Hence, failing to perform it would be a major sin but not a loss of belief.

[1438] See In Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1:11; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, al-Īmān*, 17; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ, al-Īmān*, 8.

[1439] Q. 24:2.

[1440] Al-Māturīdī here alludes to Q. 4:16.

[1441] Q. 71:25.

11) Again, we say, [according to al-Ka'bī:] God has divided the rulings into three in the sense that there are three divisions named disbelief, belief, and what is neither disbelief nor belief. If the ruling of [belief and disbelief] departs from [the servant], the [third ruling], which is intermediate, is required. [Now we ask al-Ka'bī:] What is the evidence that there is an intermediate name? On the contrary, God has divided people who are able to know into two divisions in the matter of the world and the Hereafter alike. Whoever makes an addition to this division has innovated something in God's religion that is not permitted to him. On the other hand, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever embraces an innovation in religion, may a curse fall upon him."[1442] So, what would be the state of the one who has invented the innovation? *We pray to God to protect us.*

i) In addition, [al-Ka'bī] cited the verses that order to fight the disbelievers and to take the jizya from them etc., [as evidence that those who have committed major sins] are not disbelievers. On the other hand, he uses verses that give the believers the glad tidings of Paradise and that they should be treated like friends [as evidence] that nor are [major sinners] believers. By saying this, [al-Ka'bī] diverged from the view of the believers. It is as if he was heedless of another view held by the believers, namely: that the glad tidings [of Paradise], according to those who consider the major sinner a believer, are on condition [of his belief, without punishment] or after he is punished [for his sins].

According to the Khawārij, the ruling about the disbelievers is of two types:

a) They are either killed or pay the jizya.

b) Or these are not applied, [such as the exemption for women, or what is not known about hypocrites]. Whoever tries to establish an "intermediate" category in the rulings because of what is required by the two categories [i.e., believers and disbelievers], rather than what [God] has stated in terms of the "intermediate", is heedless of all the opinion of the Muslim community. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1442] See, for example, Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-Ḥajj*, 85; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, *al-Manāsik*, 98.

ii) In addition, God Most High has explained three categories: disbelievers, believers, and hypocrites. The latter are those who oscillate between these two, and whom [God] has declared to be neither of them. Anyone who tries to fabricate an intermediate category in a way that is not determined by the [scriptural] text and makes it correspond [to the middle category determined by the scriptural text, i.e., the hypocrites] and who negates the reality [i.e., belief, not major sin], on the basis of which God has determined the middle [category], surely has ruined the rights of division and broken the order introduced by the Qur'an. Thus, he prompted the wrath of all groups of Islam. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iii) Then, al-Kaʿbī presented the situation of the woman [who should not be killed according to the Khawārij] as an objection and said that she had a specific ruling. This too is an empty dream. On the contrary, the rulings regarding disbelief are varied and nothing [i.e., about whether major sin negates belief] can be proven based on them. I saw that [al-Kaʿbī] opposed the Khawārij at length and exhausted himself to respond to their objections and criticisms. If one sees and reflects on these efforts [of al-Kaʿbī], one will realize that he could not achieve his desire, nor could he get rid of the criticisms directed at him. That is why I do not mention [al-Kaʿbī's words on this point] here.

12) Then, al-Kaʿbī cited as evidence the negation of the name "disbelief" and "belief" from one who committed a major sin. The Murji'a and Khawārij agree that the name "belief" is not present according to the criterion required by language but only with reference to the tradition. Thus, one may be named ["believer" or "disbeliever"] only due to mass transmission in the tradition or consensus. [Al-Kaʿbī] has claimed that these are sufficient evidence.

The Shaykh (May God have mercy on him) said: Let us say, and God alone leads to success: [al-Kaʿbī] lied while relating views from them [i.e., the Khawārij and Murji'a]. On the contrary, they agreed that the name has the meaning required by the language. However, the Khawārij regarded committing a major sin as evidence that one was a liar in his expressed assent [i.e., to belief], based on His statement: "Do people imagine [that they will be left (at ease) because they say, we believe, and will not be tested with affliction]?"[1443] The Murji'a claim that using [the servant's actions] as evidence is for the purpose of determining the truthfulness and lying [of the servant] in general, otherwise it does not mean that assent in reality does not exist without acts. [According to the Murji'a], belief consists of assent in reality, if it exists. Committing a major sin does not negate [belief] and avoiding major sins does not confirm the reality of its existence, even if [the major sin] may truthfully indicate that which is the case. *God knows best.* Since [the Murji'a and the Khawārij] accept the word as required by the language, it has been established that [al-Kaʿbī's] transmission from them is a lie.

Until the emergence of the Muʿtazilī doctrine and sect, the Muslim community called the one who committed a major sin either "a sinful believer" or "a sinful disbeliever", so that the reason for his disbelief was clear to those who considered him to be a disbeliever [i.e., the Khawārij] and the reason for his sinfulness was clear to those who considered him to be sinful [i.e., the generality of Muslims]. This nomenclature is similar to the naming of "reprehensibly forbidden" and "reprehensibly lawful", so it is known [in the former case] that the lesser of the two prohibitions is meant, which is the reprehensibly forbidden, not the absolutely forbidden. The [term reprehensibly lawful], on the other hand, indicates that the lawful in question is not worthy of preference and admiration; rather, it contains some doubts. Such is the attitude of the Muslim community towards one whom I have mentioned [i.e., one who has committed a major sin]. Then, the Muʿtazila dropped one of the two names that they considered as the source of disagreement and took the other as necessary [i.e., they stopped using the name "believer" and "disbeliever" in regard to one who had committed a major sin and retained "sinful"]. They agreed that [the name they dropped, i.e., believer and disbeliever] should not be used in an absolute manner if its reality is not definitively known. Thus, in this the Muʿtazila opposed the Muslim community. So, this is evidence that is strong enough to convince one [whose intention] is true for the sake of God. *Strength comes from God alone.*

13) Then, al-Kaʿbī objects to himself: You have attributed certain rulings to the name ["major sinner"], but will you not distinguish between

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[1443] Q. 29:2.

those who have committed major sins, since the rulings of major sins are different? [Al-Ka'bī] answers: What I do is that I say, "This is a thief, this is a slanderer of adultery". So, [al-Ka'bī] is asked: You have named him a "sinner" and verified that name. You have not withheld the name of his action from him. So why do you withhold the believer's name of "belief", which he deserves by his action [of believing], from the believer? You are expansive in naming according to ugly names [like "sinner"] but are restrictive [in naming] by beautiful names, which is an unjust act. Then, [al-Ka'bī claimed] the name "sinfulness" was not required due to the eighty lashes, but because of the friendship and respect [lost by the sinner]. This shows that [al-Ka'bī] did not understand what his opponent [i.e., from the People of Monotheism] meant. His opponent, and God knows best, wants to say that such names cannot be determined based on the rulings, due to the differences among rulings despite the equality in names, so the names must be determined in the beginning.[1444] *Strength comes from God alone.*

i) Then, the friendship and respect [that the servant deserves] differs in keeping with the virtues of various positions and the degrees in religion, for instance the messengers, then leaders, then scholars, then believers. Thus, [the friendship and respect] to be shown to those who commit major sins should be in accordance with their good deeds; and the anger they will incur [from God] due to their evil deeds. So, it is an unfair judgment to negate the good deeds of the servant because of evil deeds that are not the opposite of good deeds.[1445] *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) Then, [al-Ka'bī] brought up the verse, "The day when God will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him"[1446] as evidence for the major sinner and, relying on the verse, claimed that if the sinner were a believer, he would not be punished and would not be threatened with [punishment]. Now, the verse may be understood in various ways:

[1444] Al-Ka'bī is attacked again for making the different rulings of the Law the basis for judging belief and disbelief, rather than a subsequent discussion to it. The objection is that al-Ka'bī is willing to allow multiple names to apply to a single person when they refer to sins. Thus, someone can be a sinner, a thief and a slanderer. But in that case, why is it that someone cannot also be a believer? In fact, it is clear that the kinds of rulings that can apply to someone in the context of the Law depends on their prior name on the basis of belief or disbelief. See the earlier discussion in 7.3 (9).

[1445] Belief is the opposite of disbelief, not the opposite of the major sin. Hence the latter cannot negate it on pain of God's justice, which the Mu'tazila supposedly champion.

[1446] Q. 66:8.

a) God does not render one who commits a major sin free from the intercession of the Messenger of God. On the contrary, [the Prophet] intercedes for his sin and saves him through intercession.

b) This [i.e., what is mentioned in the verse] will happen when God says to them, "Forgive the injustices you have done to one another, it is Mine to forgive you."

c) God does not disgrace them in the same manner as He disgraces the disbelievers by afflicting them with the eternal torment of Hell, because disgrace is also diverse. In fact, God Most High says: "No food for them save bitter thorn-fruit."[1447] Again, God states the following in another place: "Therefore has he no lover here this day, nor any food save filth."[1448] Just as the degrees of torment that the people of Hell will suffer are different, so are the durations [and hence the believer will not be punished eternally].

d) It may also mean that God will not embarrass one, will not disgrace him, and will not reveal his hidden faults. This is the case with every believer. Then, the the Muʿtazilī view is invalidated by the first part of the verse, which is His words: "O you who believe! Turn to God in sincere repentance."[1449] This verse necessitates repentance for [believers] and counts it as a condition for forgiveness. Meanwhile, it retains the name "belief" for [believers] whereas, according to [the Muʿtazila], the s are forgiven on the condition that the major sins are avoided. Thus, it has been established that the verse is related to those who commit major sins and that they continue to retain the name "belief". *Strength comes from God alone.*

14) The proof that [the servant] will not lose his belief when he loses the quality of justice [by committing a major sin] is His statement Most High: "O you who believe, let there be witnesses between you when death draws nigh unto one of you, at the time of bequest – two just men from among you."[1450] If every believer were just, He would say "two

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[1447] Q. 88:6.
[1448] Q. 69:35-36.
[1449] Q. 66:8.
[1450] Q. 5:106.

among you" in the verse, because the beginning of the verse is addressed to believers. Thus, it has been established that there may be a just believer and an unjust believer. God Most High says, from: "O you who believe! When you contract a debt [for a fixed term]" until, "...of such as you approve as witnesses."[1451] If every believer were worthy of being approved [i.e., every believer avoided major sins], the condition would be of no use. Likewise, His statement, "Call to witness two just men among you..."[1452] makes it clear that a believer may be both just and unjust. Similarly, "If you find them of sound judgment, deliver over unto them their fortune"[1453] clarifies that a believer may both have sound judgment and lack it. If every believer were just and if every unjust person was a disbeliever, his testimony would not be rejected due to his sinfulness after being tested, and it would not be permissible to investigate one's state to learn about his justice and sinfulness. On the contrary, he would be asked whether or not he was a believer [for witnessing], and that would suffice. It would be necessary to accept his witness without questioning [his sinfulness], nor would his states be taken into consideration. The Muslim community has reached a consensus that it is necessary to investigate the states of people [in important matters such as witnessing] and words will not suffice, even though the latter are sufficient in matters such as the lawful, the forbidden, inheritance and worship, in which belief is essential. [This consensus] is proof that belief and that which makes one a believer and warrants the rulings of belief are not everything that negates all kinds of sinfulness and disobedience. *Strength comes from God alone.* This is the way the Muslim community carried on such tasks as paying attention to performing prayers in congregation, fasting and almsgiving; but they differed as to committing the forbidden and indulging in the sins. The present state and attitude of the Muslim community proves that the Muʿtazila and Khawārij have gone astray from the truth. *Strength comes from God alone.*

15) Now, let us mention some of al-Kaʿbī's useless tricks in response to the evidence brought against him from the Qur'an, so as to remove the

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[1451] Q. 2:282.
[1452] Q. 65:2.
[1453] Q. 4:6.

name "belief" from himself and his followers due to a major sin, to despair of God's mercy, and to choose His enmity. It is as if by doing so [he hopes] to attain worldly benefit and religious praise. *Strength comes from God alone.*

i) Al-Ka'bī responds in two ways to the person who argues from His words, "O you who believe! Return to God in a sincere repentance"[1454] that repentance is only made due to sin: The repentance mentioned in the verse is meant for the s, even though they have been already forgiven. The command of repentance here is meant for the purpose of worship as is the case with repeating the invocation, "There is no god save God (*lā ilāha illā allāh*)" and the supplication of the angels. In fact, this is clarified by His statement: "Forgive those who repent."[1455]

a) We say [to al-Ka'bī]:

I) His first answer shows his ignorance about the meaning of repentance because it means returning and regretting. If there is no sin, neither of them will happen, and if one's sin is forgiven, it is impossible to punish one for it.

II) Secondly, when God forgives the servant's sin, His right on the servant is that the servant should praise and thank Him for it. If the servant repents [even though he has already been forgiven], he will be ungrateful for the blessing of forgiveness, because with this attitude, he suggests that the sin still remains.

III) Thirdly, God said, "It may be that your Lord will expiate your evil deeds...",[1456] so He has delayed [forgiveness] upon its expiation with repentance. Thus, it has been established that sin endures, and that the servant continues to deserve the name "belief". *God knows best.*

b) As for saying, "There is no god save God", it has the feature of being always renewed because the feature of actions is that they are impermanent. However, repentance is made because of sin, whereas there is no sin [according to the Mu'tazila]. Then, saying, "There is no god save God" may have been commanded to be done for the purpose of worship, but it is impermissible to repent for a sin that has been forgiven and pardoned as it suggests that it is not forgiven. That is ungratefulness towards blessings, and such ungratefulness is impermissible, just as it is impermissible to supplicate to God that He does not oppress and act unjustly. As for the angels' supplications, it may be for the unforgiven sins of sinners. Thus, their prayers are directed towards those sins. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1454] Q. 66:8.

[1455] Q. 40:7.

[1456] Q. 66:8.

ii) Al-Kaʿbī interprets the verse, "O you who believe! Why do you say that which you will not do"[1457] as follows. This verse is related to one who does not act, such as the case with one who sees another being called on to evil by the astray and says to prevent him from joining them: "My brother! Why are you doing that which will destroy your religion and draw the wrath of your Lord upon you?" It is not that [the other person] has committed [the sin], but so that he will not commit it [i.e., hence he remains a believer due to not performing the major sin].[1458]

The following is said [to al-Kaʿbī]: If you are trying to keep the name "belief" away from one who has committed a major sin, although he glorifies the Most Gracious and fears punishment, and you do this in order for you not to be named by it [i.e., "belief"], then what you have chosen for yourself is yours. But if it is to remove this name from another, that other person is aware of your impertinence towards God in this matter, because he is aware that God has named him by a name different from that by which you name him. Thus, this person does not fall into doubt because of the slander you made against God due to the devil's deception about the reports of God [i.e., about His report that this person is a believer even if he commits the sin], while he knows from his own soul that the situation is really like that [i.e., he knows himself as a wholehearted believer]. *Strength comes from God alone.* Then, only a fool may accept your following words: that a person will speak and censure about that which he knows is a lie [i.e., because according to al-Kaʿbī the other person can never perform the sin while remaining a believer]. As for God, exalted is He, from whom nothing remains hidden, He is transcendent above this rank that any intelligent being would reject [i.e., from speaking in the Qur'an with this foolish meaning]. *Help may be asked from God alone.* As for you [al-Kaʿbī], you are deserving of [this foolish rank], because you despair of God's mercy with [the lie that if one commits a major sin, one will become a disbeliever], and you choose by your desire the enmity of God and the friendship of Satan, incurring the wrath and curse of God on the path of Satan. So, good luck with what you have chosen for yourself in the presence of God, the Generous and the Merciful. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1457] Q. 61:2.

[1458] The verse is most apparently read as questioning believers for not living up to their words with their actions, and that could include falling into major sins of omission. Al-Kaʿbī's strategy is to read the verse in such a way that the believer is speaking about a sin that another will not commit.

iii) Then [al-Kaʿbī says] about His words Most High, "Has not the time arrived for the believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of God [and of the truth that has been revealed (to them)]?"[1459] that it establishes the name "belief" even if [the servants'] hearts are not humble. [In this matter, al-Kaʿbī comments:]

a) First of all, the existence of the name of belief has been accepted without humility. You think that belief consists of assent by the tongue and knowledge in the heart.

b) Secondly, with these words, [God] may be saying to one who fears Him and is fully grateful: "Is it not incumbent on you to be afraid of Me and be grateful to Me?" Not that one is ungrateful, but rather as a notice [to remain so].

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said:

a) As for [al-Kaʿbī's] first explanation, the verse in question is about the humility that comes from remembering God, and that one who fails to be humble towards Him is a blameworthy sinner. The humility of belief comes from knowing the majesty and greatness of [God], and [this humility] never leaves the believer. Although [the heart may lose this quality over time] and one has been blamed for this reason, one still has been named "believer", even though the verse suggests that this [sin may] last for a long time. This is something that requires to be qualified as a major sin according to them [i.e., the Muʿtazila]. However, [the verse] has retained the name "belief" for [these people].

[1459] Q. 57:16.

b) As for al-Ka'bī's second answer, there [the quality attributed to God] is the quality of someone who does not know gratitude and thankfulness, and therefore turns away from accepting these two, and blames the servant in the context that he should magnify and accept him. If, according to the Mu'tazila, this is the attribute of God, then they have reached the furthest extent of the ugliest name, eternally in the lowest depths [of Hell]. We seek refuge in God from wretchedness. Then, [al-Ka'bī] spoke at length on this view, but the gist of his words is what I have pointed out. The more [al-Ka'bī] prolongs his discourse, the further he moves from the truth. *Help may be asked from God alone.*

iv) Then, [al-Ka'bī] answered about [God's] words, "If two parties of believers fall to fighting..."[1460] and said:

a) [This verse] is like His statement, "If any of you turn back from his religion..."[1461] therefore, [God] named people "believers" before they fell to fighting.

b) Secondly, [he claimed] that fighting might be unarmed, such as a debate, or they were practitioners of exhaustive inquiry (*mujtahidīn*), so they [i.e., those who fell to fighting] did not abandon belief.

[Al-Ka'bī] is answered as follows: The meaning of apostasy is invalid because the relationship between the warring parties is named "brotherhood". [God's] verse, "[If one party of them does wrong to the other], fight you that which does wrong"[1462] indicates that the aggressive party is known, and there is no reason to make exhaustive inquiry. Also, the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, was among them, so how is it possible for them to make exhaustive inquiry in this manner? Then, since the has been forgiven and no retaliation will be made against it, the command to fight [the aggressive party] signifies that their sins have become major. However, God continued to use the name "belief" for them. *God alone leads to success.*

[Al-Ka'bī] said a similar thing about His words, "The believers are naught else than brothers".[1463] We have already explained his delusion.

[1460] Q. 49:9.
[1461] Q. 2:217.
[1462] Q. 49:9.
[1463] Q. 49:10.

Then, according to [al-Kaʿbī], one who commits a major sin is an enemy of God, and it is impossible to pray for his well-being and he must be cursed. However, to make peace [between people] is to pray for their well-being and benefit. *Strength comes from God alone.*

v) Regarding the verse of retaliation and the naming [of the murderer] "brother", he says that God has promised no reward or praise for unrestricted brotherhood, but this promise applies only to religious brotherhood. The following is said to [al-Kaʿbī]: But [God] has named them [i.e., the murderer and the victim] "believers" at the beginning of the verse, and then at the end of the verse, He maintained the name of brotherhood for them. No meaning [i.e., of disbelief] has preceded to direct the mention of "brotherhood" towards. Thus, it has been established that [its meaning] is religion and the preservation of the name of belief. As for the reward, it was made conditional once upon the unrestricted name and once on the restricted one. From [the restricted meaning] is His statement: "God has rewarded them for what they said..."[1464] Then, according to you [i.e., al-Kaʿbī], the servant may be warned even though he has said that, and even if he has been promised a reward. The same holds true of the believer named unrestrictedly. In fact, God says: "And those who believe in God and His messengers, they are the truthful..."[1465] Likewise, he says: "But those who believe in God and His messengers and make no distinction between any of them, [unto them God will give their wages]."[1466] [As for those] who commit major sins, the following is said in reference to them: "He believed in God and His Messenger and made no distinction between the messengers." Then, the warning and threat are possible for such a person. Again, God says: "[God wrongs not even a mote's weight] and if there is a good deed, He will double it and will give (the doer) from His presence an immense reward."[1467] On the other hand, the one who committed a major sin did good deeds and his deed deserves the name "goodness". Thus, [one who commits a major sin] deserves the title "believer", even if there has been a divine threat made to him. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1464] Q. 5:85.
[1465] Q. 57:19.
[1466] Q. 4:152.
[1467] Q. 4:40.

vi) Then, al-Kaʿbī objects to himself by bringing up the rights that have become obligatory and permissible under the name "belief", because those who have committed major sins are also included in [the group of believers]. He responds to this objection by saying that the inclusion of those who have committed major sins among the believers is not by name [i.e., through the mention of them in scripture], but by [scholarly] consensus. [He complains that] though the sinner is neither pious nor righteous, you [i.e., al-Māturīdī and his group falsely] include him in the following verse: "This is an obligation upon the pious"[1468] and "This is an obligation upon the righteous."[1469]

The answer [to al-Kaʿbī] is as follows: The consensus included [those who committed major sins among the believers] by inferring from the address of the verses making obligatory and permissible because none of them mentioned any reason that would allow them to understand something else from it [i.e., the consensus view]; and none of the major sinners asked anyone about a specific situation (*khāṣṣ*) [intended by the verses]. On the contrary, they knew that those verses covered them. It is impermissible to address both sides [i.e., believers and disbelievers] by the name "piety" (*taqwā*). Thus, [al-Kaʿbī's] assessment is false. As for the expression, "an obligation upon such-and-such" [in the verse], it means, "it is an obligation upon the one who seeks piety in this matter"; otherwise, it does not mean obligation [i.e., it does not require the addressee to be pious]. In addition, [the two verses] mentioned above specify the meaning of piety within the frame of address. In our subject matter [i.e., discussion of belief in general], however, God includes [the major sinner] in the address without using either an unrestricted or restricted name. *Strength comes from God alone.*

vii) [Al-Kaʿbī] objects in the matter of making permissible by mentioning the insane and the child.[1470] He is answered as follows: [The insane and the child] take the ruling of belief due to others [i.e., sane believing parents or guardians]. For if it were not for such others, the ruling would not be necessary for them, just as rulings are not required for the children of disbelievers.

[1468] Q. 2:180.

[1469] Q. 2:236.

[1470] His argument is that though these two are not of sound constitution and maturity, they are subject to the rulings of Islam applicable to those who are. Likewise, major sinners may be subjected to the rulings relevant to the believers, even though they have left their faith.

However, in the context we are talking about, he [i.e., the major sinner] has no other to follow [in terms of belief]. It has therefore been established that he is entitled to it [i.e., his rights or rulings] by his own belief.

viii) Then, an objection has been made to [al-Kaʿbī] based on the prayer and fasting of the sinner, and he has responded to this by [claiming that the worship by the sinner] is to prevent the increase of his sins and to save him from the torment that his abandonment of them would cause.

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: The following is said to [al-Kaʿbī]: You did not understand the question. It only means that [fasting and prayer] are permissible only through belief. If [the major sinner] was not a believer, [prayer and fasting would not be valid for him], and his performance of them would not remove the torment that would arise if he abandoned them. Rather, there would be nothing against him if he abandoned them [as they are only obligatory upon believers], and it would not be permissible for him to do them. *Strength comes from God alone.*

We have written a book refuting [al-Kaʿbī's] book on these verses,[1471] so there is no need to prolong the discourse on this topic.

[7.4. The Necessity of the Distinction Between and Major Sin in Terms of Wisdom]

Then, let us mention the distinction between the sin that requires eternal torment and the sin that does not require it from the point of view of wisdom. This may be done in two ways:

1) First, [we may discuss this distinction] in terms of the varying degrees encompassed by sins in themselves. In fact, God has promised that He will requite only in due kind. This is the requirement of wisdom since punishment is not arbitrary, but according to what wisdom obligates. The reason for this is that [punishment] is not from the kinds of things that are arbitrary, especially when it arises from one whom no opposition can harm. Then, [God] is described by pardon and mercy and, for this reason, He did not obligate the forgiveness and pardon of many sins.[1472]

[1471] This probably refers to *Radd kitāb al-Kaʿbī fī waʿīd al-fussāq*. See Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adilla*, 1:359.

[1472] On al-Māturīdī's view, God does not punish gratuitously but only according to what

Then, [this wisdom] manifests itself in various ways.

i) First of all, there is one who disobeys God with some of the major sins other than polytheism, except at the time of disobedience he achieves obedience by fearing His punishment and His anger, hoping for His mercy, and trusting in His generosity. As compared to the disobedience he committed by succumbing to lust and anger etc., his goodness outweighs his evil. Thus, it is not permissible for [one who has committed a major sin] to be deprived of the benefits of goodness, nor is it permissible for the punishment of evil to be necessary for him. One whose action is like this has been described by generosity and graciousness, whereas these two attributes [depriving goodness and punishing evil] do not mean that. *Strength comes from God alone.* On the other hand, there is not for one who denies God and associates partners with Him a meaning deserving the name of goodness and virtue, because he belies Him and denies His commands and prohibitions. Thus, it is neither possible for such a person to have hope, nor for the permanence of his suffering to be contrary to the meaning of generosity. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) Secondly, God, majestic is His praise, has promised to punish only to the degree of the sins committed. As for polytheism, it is known rationally to be the gravest sin and unlike other sins, it leaves no good deed. Thus, [the punishment for the sin of polytheism] is the eternal torment of Hell. For, as it is known, the disbeliever would be content with many times the punishment if it were accompanied by salvation one day. This reveals that the completion of his punishment is eternal [torment]. If [eternal punishment] was given for other than it [i.e., for major sin rather than polytheism], then [major sin] would be punished for more than the act warrants. That would be injustice according to wisdom, and God is majestic above [injustice]. Those who commit sins lower than [polytheism] have good deeds, but those who commit [polytheism have] none. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iii) Again, the mandated punishments applied in this world have been made expiation for one's sins. If [the mandated punishments] had

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is fair based on His wisdom. Additionally, He is forgiving and can forgo his punishment. But wisdom does not imply that He is obliged to forgive. Yet, for al-Māturīdī, crucially, only disbelief deserves eternal punishment.

not functioned as expiation [because the major sinner is not a believer], then they would have been an increase over the punishment for disbelief. However, the penalty [for the sin] that is less than disbelief cannot be more [than the penalty for disbelief].[1473] Thus, it has been established that the [mandated punishments] are an expiation [for the believer]. Unbelief, on the other hand, has no expiation in this world. So, it is impossible for the punishment [of disbelief] to be a mandated punishment. Hence, the punishment for [disbelief] has been made eternal, and the punishment for sins other [than disbelief] has been made a mandated punishment. Likewise, the punishment threatened [in the Hereafter for the major sins is limited]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iv) Additionally, God, majestic is His praise, has announced that the otherworldly punishment promised to those who have disbelieved and led others astray [i.e., towards disbelief] is twice that of those who have disbelieved but not led others astray. Then, if the punishment for the sin of the disbeliever for other than leading astray was the same as the punishment for the sin of leading astray, the punishment of every disbeliever would be doubled because every disbeliever has other major sins besides disbelief. However, God has specified the doubled punishment for those who have led others astray. In fact, He has said, "But they verily will bear their own loads and other loads beside their own"[1474] and those who followed them said, "Our Lord! These led us astray, [so give them double torment of the Fire]",[1475] and God gave to them all a double punishment. Thus, the view that it [i.e., the eternal torment of Hell] is the punishment for a major sin is negated. On the contrary, it is more appropriate to give it as a double punishment for disbelief, than to give it as an equivalent punishment for the grave sin that a Muslim has committed.[1476] Do you not see that God punishes the disbeliever for all his sins, major and minor? However, this is not the case with those who believe in Islam.[1477] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1473] If the punishment for major sins was eternal torment in Hell as well as the mandated punishments, then this would be more punishment than for disbelief, which is absurd.

[1474] Q. 29:13.

[1475] Q. 7:38.

[1476] As the disbeliever is already eternally in Hell, this doubling is presumably in the intensity of the punishment.

[1477] The argument proceeds as follows. If major sin deserved eternal punishment, then every disbeliever with a major sin would be due a double punishment. But the Qur'an

2) As for the second point of view, it is as follows:

i) Unbelief is a doctrine in which one has conviction. Such a doctrine is believed in forever. So, the punishment for the [doctrine of disbelief] is also eternal. Other major sins are committed for various periods of time, which is during the surrender to lust, not forever. Thus, the punishment for major sins [is not eternal]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) The essence of disbelief is bad; it cannot be allowed or its forbidden nature be lifted. Thus, due to wisdom, the punishment [of disbelief] cannot be removed and cannot be forgiven. It is rationally possible to remove the prohibition of other sins and to waive the reason for punishment. Thus, it is possible for the penalty [to be lifted]. *God alone leads to success.*

iii) Forgiving a disbeliever is an unjust act of pardon because [the disbeliever] denies the Blessing Giver and sees this as a reality. Thus, [the forgiveness of a disbeliever] means the waste of forgiveness and the abolishment of blessing. However, this is not the case with other sins. On the contrary, those who commit other sins [e.g., major sins] recognize and accept the Blessing Giver. The highest position is His, and the clearest place belongs to His grace. Thus, it is permissible for one who commits a major sin to be forgiven and pardoned in terms of wisdom.[1478] *Help may be asked from God alone.*

iv) God Most High did good to [one who committed a major sin] in religion at a time when he was rude to Him in his act, such that [God] made His right [to be believed] more exalted in his heart than both worlds. [He made] His prophets and messengers loftier in [the servant's] breast than belittling even a hair on their heads, demeaning any element of God's religion, or inclining towards any of His enemies instead of His friends in matters that he chose and preferred. All of this is a gift and blessing of God to [the servant who has committed a major sin]. Thus, it is impossible for God to waste His bounties and change His blessings due to a rude action [originating from the servant]. God knows that the measure of [this rudeness] within the sins does not reach even a portion of His countless blessings and favors.

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has specified double punishment for those who disbelieve and lead others astray. Hence, major sin does not deserve eternal punishment.

[1478] For God to forgive the unrepentant disbeliever who denies Him would be to act unjustly and wastefully, which also amounts to acting foolishly. Therefore, wisdom prohibits it, unlike forgiveness for the major sin.

Again, God has given a guarantee to His creatures that He will not change a bounty He has given to a people unless they change what is in themselves,[1479] and He will [not] waste all of what He has honored them with. The above-mentioned [issue of major sin] is included within this scope.

Also, God articulated on the tongue of His Messenger that He will admit everyone to Paradise except those who refuse to enter it.[1480] Does [God] put the one I have mentioned [i.e., the major sinner] on par with His enemies? He has fought hard against the enemies of God to support His religion and elevate His word, and he breathed his last in this manner. No, I swear by God, He does not do that; He is the Independent, the Generous, He is the Pardoning the Forgiving, and He is the Gracious the Loving.

In addition, glad tidings came from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, that the servants will rejoin their loved ones. Then, one mentioned [i.e., the major sinner] loves the Messenger of God, so does God make him a companion of Satan and forbid him from visiting His Messenger? [God's] praise is majestic above this quality ascribed to Him by the Muʿtazila and Khawārij. This practice [of describing God] is evident in all members of [these groups], so that none of them could stay away from it. Perhaps no Khārijī or Muʿtazilī died secure from that. It is far from wisdom that one who prefers the enmity of God for the sake of his own mean desires, who despairs of His mercy for the smallest benefit, who prefers to leave His religion through his sect, anxious over a small worldly bounty, is successful in reaching the truth in religion, whereas the one whose characteristics are the opposite of this is deprived of success. *Strength comes from God alone.*

v) The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: Then, such names as sinfulness, wickedness, disobedience, or injustice occurring in the traditions in regard to the divine threat refer to three qualities [i.e., disbelief, polytheism and sinfulness]. Some of these names – in the context of the wisdom to point to the act so named because of [these qualities] they have – may be other than sinfulness or another blamed name [i.e., the word refers instead to polytheism and disbelief], while some others may not [i.e., the meaning is sinfulness]. By the [word "sinfulness"], it is far-fetched to mean two such different things [i.e., sinfulness on the one hand and disbelief and polytheism on the other] together.[1481] Thus, [according to the context in which the term is used], it should be attributed to [the group] about which there is no doubt in terms of name and ruling. Since there are three groups and [sinfulness and other words] do not cover all at once, it has been established that a specific one [i.e., one of the three] is meant here. Thus, the term "sinfulness" should be attributed to the one of these three groups about which there is no doubt. *Strength comes from God alone.* If the term "sinfulness" is generalized [i.e., if it covers not only the sinner but also the disbeliever and the polytheist], a contradiction arises because reports of pardon have been transmitted. Thus, specificity has been established [i.e., sinfulness only signifies the sinner]. *Strength comes from God alone.* Or, due to the division of its referent into [the three parts] mentioned [i.e., disbelief, polytheism and sinfulness], the term "sinfulness" may be attributed to both specificity and generality. Hence, the appropriate attitude is fear not certainty, such that whoever speaks with certainty in this context departs from what is required by wisdom in doubtful situations. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1479] See Q. 8:53.

[1480] Al-Māturīdī probably alludes to the following hadith: ""All of my community will enter Paradise, except those who do not want to." His Companions said: "O Messenger of God, who does not want to?" He said: "Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me does not want to enter paradise."" Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-Iʿtiṣām*, 2.

vi) Then, the indication that the divine threat of eternal torment in Hell cannot be for sins less than polytheism [and disbelief] is that people naturally avoid things that will lead them to leave the religion they believe in. This is the case whether they believe in [their religion] by relying on reason, proof, or imitation. On the other hand, people, regardless of their religion, may commit lapses that do not make them [apostatize]. This [observation of ours] is evidence that this is a natural characteristic of people. In fact, this is supported by the intellect, because beliefs are everlasting with their owners [i.e., one sticks to them for life]. However, such is not the case with the indicated acts [i.e., lapses] and their opposites [i.e., worship]. Likewise, the tradition deals with the indicated acts [i.e., sinfulness and disbelief] differently, so the same is the case for their abandonment. Thus, these statements of ours indicate that the Mu'tazila sect diverges from the natural constitution [of humanity] and the direction prompted by [divine] governance. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1481] The names of wickedness, sinfulness, injustice and disobedience are used both for sinful believers and sinful disbelievers and polytheists. But the groups cannot be meant together.

[7.5. The Mu'tazila's Approach to the Name "Believer"]

Let us mention a few of the reasons that led the Mu'tazila to the attitude of suspending judgment about naming oneself by belief, as required by their teachings. According to their teachings, the border between major sins and s is unclear, so that the servant is afraid and hopeful, neither feeling safe, nor despairing. So, we say as follows: Since no one among you [i.e., the Mu'tazila] claims to be free from all [sins] or to have reached the extent of knowledge obligating trust and despair, this expresses a state of oscillation between major and . [According to you,] major sin wipes out the name "belief", and makes you doubt about the name "belief" and its disappearance, just as [doubt enters your heart] about the name of major sin and . Thus, this doubt prevented one from feeling safe [from punishment] or despairing of mercy. Hence, that which prevents naming oneself by belief is the same as that which removes the two [i.e., feeling safe and despair]. Then, according to you, it is permissible to accept that the servant is [a believer] despite his fear of punishment. However, God has informed you that the believer has no fear.[1482] So, why are you not afraid to call yourself a "believer"? Lying, which is perhaps a major sin, has removed the name "belief" from you. Thus, you name [yourself "believer"] because of arrogance about yourself. However, God Most High forbade you to ascribe purity to yourselves by saying, "Ascribe not purity unto yourselves."[1483]

Then, you will be countered with the concepts of "goodness" and "piety". Do you testify that you are [good and pious] or not? If they testify to this, the pious and good people should fear that they would draw the hatred of God and eternal torment in Hell [due to the above verse]. In this case, Hell will not be the abode of the wicked, but the abode of the righteous. However, God Most High says: "The righteous verily will be in delight..."[1484] In addition, the prayer mentioned in the following verse loses its meaning:

[1482] See Q. 2:38, 2:62, 2:112.
[1483] Q. 53:32.
[1484] Q. 82:13.

"Take our souls together with the righteous."[1485] If they avoid naming themselves by these [i.e., "pious" and "righteous"], they should also avoid naming themselves by belief because belief, like righteousness and piety, is the name of the thing that saves the servant from the hatred of God. Then, [the Mu'tazili] is asked: It has been established that the prophets and messengers used to supplicate to God in desire and awe, in fear and hope.[1486] However, [the Mu'tazila] claim that [the prophets] were not tested with major sins. Thus, this fear is due to the sin with which they have not been tested. Now, does this not indicate to you that leaving the border between major sin and unclear [and not specifying the two exactly] is not meant for the servants to fear God and have hope, but for God to punish whom He wills with s? Based on your statement, "The thing that requires the otherworldly punishment [i.e., the act of sin] destroys belief", you should understand that you are not a believer, just as you have reported. *God alone leads to success.*

However, God Most High says: "The (true) believers are those only who believe in God and His messenger and afterward doubt not."[1487] According to you, however, the believer does not fear God's vengeance, nor does he hope for His mercy. On the contrary, if he is a believer, and only if he is a believer, he deserves His mercy, and it is unthinkable that God should punish him [eternally]. It is belief that carries [people] to this state [on your account]. So, how do you regard fear, which is not truly found in believers [due to the verses alluded to above] as necessary for believers, and how do you withhold them from naming themselves by belief because they doubt it? In fact, this doubt stems from fear. This is an obvious contradiction. [i.e., you say that the servant should fear punishment, yet fear fosters doubt, which destroys belief.] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[7.6. Is Major Sin Forgiven Through Intercession?]

1) Some said: If it is possible for the major sin to receive intercession, one who swears to commit an act that deserves intercession would be commanded to commit a major sin.[1488]

[1485] Q. 3:193.

[1486] See Q. 21:90.

[1487] Q. 49:15.

[1488] In other words, someone hypothetically making an oath to commit a deed deserving intercession would then be bound to perform a major sin, which is absurd.

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: We say that this is nothing but a delusion because the act for which the servant receives intercession is not the same as that through which he deserves intercession. On the contrary, the servant deserves intercession through the good deeds that bring divine friendship, which he abandoned [in falling into sin]. Thus, the words one should say to one who has sworn [to do good deeds] are not "Disobey!", but rather "Obey in order to deserve intercession in [the matter wherein you disobeyed!]" Likewise, if one takes an oath by saying, "I will do the deed through which I deserve to be forgiven", one should not say to him, "Commit s!", but rather tell him to avoid major sins and repent in order to be forgiven. The same holds true of intercession.

Intercession is among the strongest evidence [that those who commit major sins are believers]. In fact, the Qur'an and the reports from the Messenger of God arrived with it. The intercession that is promised and instructed occurs when slips that require divine hatred and punishment are committed, and one who commits [such a major sin] is forgiven through the intercession of good people and those with whom God is pleased.

2) Then, the servant will not be punished for his s according to those who hold the eternal torment of Hell to apply to the major sin along with the disbelievers who will not be forgiven through intercession. If that is so, then most of what has come from the Qur'anic verses and hadiths related to divine benevolence will lose its validity and the supplications of the believers that beg the intercession of the Messenger will be false. *Strength comes from God alone.*

3) Some have said: Intercession takes place in two ways:

i) To mention someone's good deeds in the presence of another, as he values [the intercessor] on account of his position and status.

ii) One's supplication for another.

The first form of intercession may be relied upon in the practice of intercession.

The second is about those God elucidates with His words: "Those who bear the Throne... that is the supreme triumph"[1489] and, "They cannot intercede except for him whom He is pleased."[1490] The expression in this [last] verse refers to both forms of intercession because one with whom [God] is pleased has a high position and value, and is mentioned by the verse in which the intercession of angels occurs.

[1489] Q. 40:7-9.

4) The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: We say, and God alone leads to success: The [first] kind [of intercession] has no meaning in relation to the Hereafter for two reasons:

i) This [i.e., the first kind of intercession] is based on the valuation of a matter by one who does not know the situation [i.e., the intercessor does not know the detail of the sinner's deeds]. However, God, majestic is His praise, is one who is omniscient over its reality. Indeed, someone other than Him may have had aspects of those realities covered over, such as His saying: "A day that God gathered the messengers and asked them, "What answer was given to you?" They will say, "We have no knowledge…"[1491] Jesus said: "I spoke unto them only that which You commanded me."[1492] Hence, God has the knowledge of that [reality], and they have declared that they are free from knowledge of it, and they have admitted that God alone has it. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) There are books that are read in which the deeds of the children of Adam and everything they did in the past, small or big, are recorded. If there is a need to provide proof to evaluate [someone,] then [the books of deeds] are sufficient, whereas if they are to provide information, then God knows about them independently of that. *Strength comes from God alone.*

5) As for the verse that is related to supplication [i.e., "They cannot intercede except for him whom He is pleased"], we also affirm that those who have the qualities mentioned in the verse will be interceded for [by angels] with respect to infractions and sins arising from them. However, they are not interceded for their [good deeds], since it would be impermissible on account of wisdom to punish them. Rather, they are given the greatest reward and the highest rank because [of those deeds]. Thus, asking for intercession and begging for forgiveness for such people would be ugly in various aspects:[1493]

[1490] Q. 21:28.

[1491] Q. 5:109.

[1492] Q. 5:117.

[1493] The general line of argument here is to show that intercession as mentioned in the verse is only coherent for the sinner and not the person with a balance of good deeds.

i) Since it is impermissible to punish such people on account of wisdom, it would be as if [the angels] asked [God] not to act unjustly and foolishly. Such a request would be an insult when directed to the most sinful person, let alone as a means of supplication to God, majestic is the Gracious, the Wise above this description.

ii) What [such a servant] should do is to receive the reward [from God] with gratitude and praise, since he is not punished, but rewarded. In contrast, in the supplication [for intercession] is hiding and ingratitude towards this reward. It is impossible for there to be permission for the like of this, and for such a supplication. *God alone leads to success.*

iii) The request[1494] [for intercession] for one who has been promised Paradise and who has been given glad tidings of it suggests that one is unaware of [this promise and glad tidings]. The only exception is that the time [of entering Paradise] has not been explained, so [the intercession] is to hasten [entry].[1495] This is our view on those who commit major sins: were they punished to the degree of their sins, in terms of wisdom that would be justice. Thus, granting the authority of intercession to those who ask for intercession for them is not a requirement of justice and fulfillment of what is due, but rather virtue and benevolence. *Strength comes from God alone.*

6) In the interpretation of the words of God Most High, "God forgives not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him, but He forgives (all) save that to whom He will",[1496] Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm[1497] says the following: "God has promised that He will forgive whomsoever He wills, then He clarified this [forgiveness] as relating to s with His statement: "If you avoid the

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This opposes the interpretation of the Muʿtazila who deny the status of believer for the major sinner and hold that the avoidance of major sins leads to forgiveness of s, meaning that intercession would not be needed for sins.

[1494] Instead of reading the word *fa-ṭall* as *fa-buṭlān* as in the printed editions, it seems to me more accurate to read it as *fa-ṭalab*, both on morphological and semantic grounds (*Translator*).

[1495] According to al-Māturīdī, every believer is promised Paradise (eventually), so it might be thought that praying for their intercession lacks wisdom. Al-Māturīdī provides the exception that it can hasten the entry for those who would otherwise be detained by punishment for their sins.

[1496] Q. 4:48.

[1497] Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm (d. 200-1/816-17) was an early Basran Muʿtazilī. He was a prolific author and was criticized for his views by other Muʿtazilīs. See van Ess, *Theology and Society, Vol. 2*, 450-52.

major sins, which you are forbidden, [We will expiate your evil deeds and make you enter at a noble gate]."[1498] The divine threat has been established for major sins but the promise has remained [for s]. Hence, its due right has continued upon the aforementioned [condition, i.e., of avoiding the major sins] because this is the most likely for what I have described."

The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: We [object to this statement of Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm] from various aspects:

i) The threat of torment mentioned [in the verse] may be related to considering the command and prohibition lawful and taking them lightly [i.e., disbelief]. Thus, the hope of forgiveness in this verse cannot be ignored, and accordingly, the hope and expectation of forgiveness cannot be eliminated with a twofold divine threat [i.e., for both major and s] or by suspending judgment for them. As for making a definite judgment about one of the two aspects [i.e., the impossibility of forgiving the major sin] based on what is probable while preventing definiteness to the other based on probability [i.e., the possibility of forgiveness of a], it is arbitrary. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) The verse ["God forgives not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him, but He forgives (all) save that to whom He will"][1499] is about distinguishing [the sins] that are forgivable from those that are unforgivable. Now, if [the forgivable sins in the verse] are confined to s, the specification of the name "polytheism" becomes invalid [i.e., the judgment that unforgivable sins consist of polytheism alone] and the forgivable sins remain hidden to one who hears [the verse]. In fact, the matter of the divine threat conveyed [in the verse] was not on the topic of the distinction [between major sin and]. On the contrary, [the verse] that raises this distinction is about the forgiveness of sins by expiating them. Expiation takes place either in exchange of the reward for the good deeds [of the servant] or punishment, as the verse says: "If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden, [We will expiate your evil deeds and make you enter at a noble gate]."[1500] *God alone leads to success.*

[1498] Q. 4:31.
[1499] Q. 4:48.
[1500] Q. 4:31.

iii) God says, "[He forgives] whom He wills."[1501] This is an allusion that it is people who are forgiven, and not sins. Thus, it is impermissible to try to specify which sins will be forgiven through the verse that points to people. In the verses of the divine threat, there is a determination about who they refer to, such that it is not possible to direct them towards that [i.e., sins]. Thus, it is more appropriate [for Q. 4:31 not to be a verse of divine threat]. *God alone leads to success.*

iv) Thereupon, He says, "[He forgives] whom He wills",[1502] and s according to you are forgiven due to wisdom, not the promise. The verse [i.e., Q. 4:31] is for definition. *Strength comes from God alone.*

7) Then, the Muʿtazila say: "If one who commits a persists in this sin, he becomes a major sinner." However, to persist in that action is not to always to do it, because there is no action that is done continuously without moving on to another action. Hence, what is meant by persisting on sin is to fail to repent and regret it. All sins, including polytheism, are forgiven when repented and regretted. The doctrine of [the Muʿtazila] invalidates not only the distinction between polytheism and other sins in this verse [i.e., Q. 4:48], but also the distinction between major sins and [minor] sins in the other verse [i.e., Q. 4:31]. Thus, the result is that every sin will require eternal torment of Hell unless they repent. This is a thing that is obvious to one who reflects. *Strength comes from God alone.*

8) Someone said: Every disobedience to God is a thing to which Satan calls towards and when it is done, he feels happy. Well, why is [every disobedience to God] not obedience [to Satan?] In addition, whoever commits an act to obey Satan becomes a disbeliever or has worshipped Satan through [that act] because it amounts to Satan inventing a Law that is against the Law of God and calling him to it. Whoever worships Satan, then God has explained the degrees of the servants of Satan [in Hell].

Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said: We say: This issue is not a problem for the Khawārij and the Muʿtazila because they accept that prophets and righteous people may stumble. But this may cause problems for some obsessively deluded people, such that Satan whispers them this [thought], thus leading them to disbelief. For, as it is known, this is the adornment of the devil and a thing to which he calls. Thus, [these people] become disbelievers who obey the devil due to their belief. We ask God to protect us from [this thought].

[1501] Q. 4:48.

[1502] Q. 4:48.

Then, we may refute [this idea] from different angles:

i) Although Satan rejoices and takes pleasure in [the stumbling] of human beings due to the ominousness of his nature and the evil of his choice, this involves no obedience to him because one who commits an act [of] is not committing it because it is the command of Satan, and he calls one to it. For obedience is what is done to fulfill a command, not to make one happy and pleased. Indeed, for the servants there are things of pleasure, desire and happiness in what God has given them, yet it is impossible to describe God as obedient to them, or for the servants to enjoin God to act.[1503] This indicates that this is not the way to know obedience. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) Religions are [essentially] beliefs and not acts because beliefs cannot be subjected and dominated, no one can control another's belief, and no has the authority to prevent [another from believing]. They [i.e., beliefs] are specifically actions of the heart. Perhaps there is a connection between verbal articulations[1504] and [beliefs] because one cannot use another's tongue, just as he cannot use another's heart, though he can use his other organs [i.e., in compulsion]. Since religions are as we have mentioned, and since disbelief and belief are [essentially] religion, that which I am referring to is not a religion even if it is obedience. Unbelief is also a religion, but it is not obedience in the aspect that I have mentioned [i.e., because it is not done in accordance with the command]. According to that which has been reported from Abū Ḥanīfa (may God have mercy on him), he answered this question as follows: "What you mention [i.e., belief] is realized by intention, not what occurs in an unintentional state. On this basis, there are certain things that are attached to the intention [i.e., acts], and these are excluded from the ordering of beliefs that we have explained." *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1503] If Satan merely being happy about the servants performing certain actions was enough to establish their obedience to him, then human happiness could establish God's servitude to them, which is absurd.

[1504] Lit. "tongues" (*al-alsun*), and the word is used in its bodily sense later in the sentence.

iii) Again, when every believer disobeys God in relation to something, it is as if he has been prompted towards it, because at that time he has given in to his lust, anger, sense of honor or similar feelings that lead him to it. So, the servant did not intend to disobey his Lord or obey Satan [while committing that deed]. Rather, it is as if he has been prompted into [that act] by that which I have mentioned, such as [lust, anger, etc.] Thus, it is not necessary that he disbelieves. God punishes [the servant] because He has given him that [i.e., rational and volitional power] by which he is able to refrain from being driven into [that deed]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

iv) The following may also be said: It is God's blessing to His servants that He does not make [the servant's sin] obedience and worship to Satan, since He knows that this will be difficult for them. So, He honored them with a feeling of enmity towards Satan even while they disobeyed Him, making them see [Satan] as the most hated creature, and making it hard for their nature and intellects to do things that would make Satan happy and please him, let alone obey and worship him. Thus, God has forgiven [the sins] of His servants in regard to that [i.e., pleasing Satan] for two reasons:

a) The fact that in the worldly life [such deeds] are not named obedience to and worship of Satan.

b) He made [the servant] desire forgiveness and pardon such that at the time of disobedience he regarded Satan as an enemy and hoped for the mercy of the Lord of the Worlds. He is known for generosity and benevolence, by which He continuously returns to them with kindness and grace. For that He possesses the highest praise.

Then, if the servant believes in obedience to the Lord and recognizes servitude, He makes his heart feel the greatness of His blessings and favors on him, and then shows him the greatness of His sovereignty and power by reminding him of His wisdom in His creation and the efficacy of His will. Hence, the servant prevents himself from inclining to obey one whom if he obeyed him, he would not have obeyed God, and protects him from the delusion of worshiping anyone other than Him. Thus, after [the servant's] heart becomes tranquil upon this and [such a state] becomes more valuable in his eyes than the world and the Hereafter, it is not possible that an act occurring due to his overpowering lust, a mercy for which he hopes, or a reason that pushes him towards it, leads him to obey or worship anyone other than [God]. On the contrary, [the feelings] that I have just mentioned are constantly in his heart while committing the act [of sin]. This [state of sinning] is peculiar to disbelievers who believe in obeying one other than [God] and serving one who is not worthy of worship, such that they turn to the likes of Satan and the lower soul.[1505] *Strength comes from God alone.*

9) The Jurist Abû Manṣûr (may God have mercy on him) said: Then, the principle in everything that has been threatened is that the reality of that falls upon its perpetrator in accord with the different aspects of evil that are known in their varieties to the intellect. In this way the name of one who commits each act [will also be different]. If this causes various conflicting meanings that are incomprehensible, then each is not the same in every aspect of evil, and its agent will not be subjected to [the same] blame. These [meanings] are hidden to one who hears [that name]. Thus, with the intellect with which one has been honored one must know the differing contexts of that [i.e., sin], so that he avoids combining them. However, one may examine the understandings on which the community has agreed, observing the outcome; or examine all that has come from tradition, discovering the truth of the matter; or [God] makes [that person] able to encompass all the branches of wisdom, so that he sees that [the name of sin in question] would be too restricted through specification and hence must be taken as general.

As for realizing the meaning derived from the generality [of the verse] in terms of [God's] judgment [we shall say the following:] it is known that if this was the truth in terms of wisdom or necessary in terms of governance, the heretics would consider it the most obvious way to insult the Qur'an and the easiest way to say that the Qur'an has not been revealed by the Most Gracious. For He has described [the Qur'an]: "[Will they not then ponder on the Qur'an?] If it had been from other than God they would have found therein much incongruity."[1506] Again, God has said: "Falsehood cannot come at it from before it or from behind it";[1507] and, "We have, without doubt, sent down the message and We will assuredly guard it."[1508] Then, one sees that most of the rulings in [the Qur'an] are different from the immediate meaning in terms of generality and specificity. Thus, taking [the meaning in its general purport] leads to turning from the path of wisdom and removing the due right of [divine] governance. God is majestic above attaching this quality to His proof or this contradiction to His evidence.

[1505] This goes some way to explain how al-Māturīdī understands polytheism (without repentance) as the only unforgivable sin. He thinks that, in a certain sense, every act of disbelief is one of polytheism, since it involves a kind of worship or service to other than God.

[1506] Q. 4:82.

10) Then, [God], majestic is His praise, declared opposites for the names of praise and blame that He sent down. When these opposites are present, it is apparent that the unrestricted aspect of the name must be removed. As He says: "The righteous verily will be in delight; the wicked will verily will be in Hell."[1509] Then, He characterized them, saying, "But the record of the vile is in Sijjīn"[1510] until the end of the sura. Thus, God explained the unrestricted sinner [i.e., the disbeliever] who is the target of the divine threat and what came from him of denial. He left off [mentioning the qualities of] the righteous person as He had explained it in another place that He had instructed him [i.e., the Prophet].[1511] Then, God said: "Is he who is a believer like unto him who is a sinner? They are not alike."[1512] So, He expressed who is meant by the believer and what is his destination, who is the sinner, where he will return, and that he denied the Hereafter.[1513]

He says in His verses: "How shall God guide a people who disbelieved after their belief [and (after) they bore witness that the messenger is true and after clear proofs (of God's sovereignty) had come unto them]. And God guides not wrongdoing folk."[1514] And His statement: "They said, "We were not of those who prayed...""[1515] As for those who fail to pay almsgiving,

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[1507] Q. 41:42.
[1508] Q. 15:9.
[1509] Q. 82:13-14.
[1510] Q. 83:7.
[1511] The righteous are discussed in Q. 83:18-28 but the detail of their goodness is not given, as contrasted with the evildoers.
[1512] Q. 32:18.
[1513] Al-Māturīdī here interprets statements linking the divine threat of eternal torment with transgression of the Law as referring to disbelievers. The Qur'anic citations that follow are especially focused on the pre-Islamic Arabs.
[1514] Q. 3:86.
[1515] Q. 74:43.

[God says]: "And they are disbelievers in the Hereafter."[1516] He states the following about usury: "As for him who returns [(to usury) – such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein.]"[1517] He says, "And of their taking usury [when they were forbidden it]..."[1518] They considered usury lawful by saying: "Trade is just like usury."[1519] The same holds true of the wealth of orphans [i.e., they used to consume it].[1520] They never used to pay or give a share of the spoils for those who were unable to see battle. Such too was the case with murder. [The disbelievers] used to kill people unjustly and consider it lawful, just as He mentioned: "Remember God's favor unto you: How you were enemies..."[1521]

Such, now, is the way of the realities of the divine threat and the situations that invalidate the name "belief". In the Hereafter, people will be divided into groups: "A host will be in the Garden, and a host of them in the Flame";[1522] those whose books of deeds are given from their right and those from their left, believers and disbelievers. Again, God Most High says: "And ward off (from yourselves) the Fire prepared for disbelievers."[1523] The threat was fulfilled for the people mentioned in these verses and the furthest extent of ugly names became necessary for them. As for those who did not reach the level of these in evil, the divine threat about them may be interpreted in various ways:

i) To warn people to avoid choosing the states that I have mentioned.

ii) To declare that if the servant has no good deeds, this will be his punishment.

iii) To inform that based on His wisdom regarding these people, God may forgive them despite what they deserve, or He may allow the righteous people to intercede for them.

[1516] Q. 41:7.
[1517] Q. 2:275.
[1518] Q. 4:161.
[1519] Q. 2:275.
[1520] See Q. 4:10.
[1521] Q. 3:103.
[1522] Q. 42:7.
[1523] Q. 3:131.

iv) Or He may expiate [their sins] through their good deeds or by punishing them to the extent of their sin, except for polytheism. [The servant] receives the reward for all the good deeds he has done. In fact, he was honored to be able to do these good deeds and be blessed with the grace to obey his Lord in the worldly life and to breathe his last in this way. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Chapter Eight

Enquiries of Belief and Islam

8.1. Enquiry: [Profession and Assent in Belief]

One group said that faith consists specifically of professing with the tongue and has nothing to do with the heart.[1524]

1) Abū Manṣūr (may God have mercy on him) said: We say, and God alone leads to success: The most suitable place for belief to occur [in the human being] is the heart. This view is supported by both traditional and rational evidence.

i) The Scriptural evidence is as follows:

a) God Most High said about the hypocrites: "[Let not them grieve you who vie one with another in the race to disbelief of] such as say with their mouths: "We believe," but their hearts believe not…";[1525] Also, "The wandering Arabs say: We believe. Say (unto them, O Muḥammad): You believe not, but rather say, "We submit," for belief has not yet entered into your hearts."[1526] Thus, [God has] negated their words as belief until their hearts believe, and He said: "They make it a favor unto you (Muḥammad) that they have surrendered (unto Him). Say, "Deem not your surrender a favor unto me; but God does confer a favor on you, inasmuch as He has led you to belief, if you are earnest."[1527] Thus, God has declared that if they are believers – through God's guidance – they will be believers if they are truthful. If belief were only with the tongue, they would have spoken the truth when they professed belief with the tongue. Again, God Most High says: "O you who believe! When believing women come to you as fugitives, examine them. God is Best Aware of their belief..."[1528] God Most High has stated that He knows their belief better. Now, if belief only consisted of professing with the tongue, every hearer would be the same in terms of knowing [whether one truly believed or not]. God Most High says again: "And they swear by God that they are, in truth, of you, when they are not of you..."[1529] [In this verse], God reveals that they are liars in [their claims]. He also said: "But nay, by your Lord, they will not believe (in truth) [until they make you judge of what is in dispute between them and find within themselves no dislike of that which you decide, and submit with full submission]."[1530] If [belief] consisted of nothing else than [profession] by the tongue, He would not have negated their belief because there was a dislike within themselves. God Most High says again: "And whosoever is not able to afford to marry free, believing women, [let them marry from the believing maids whom your right hands possess]."[1531] Right after that, He adds: "God knows best concerning your belief"[1532] and clarifies that belief is a reality that God alone knows. Moreover, God Most High says: "And of mankind are some who say, "We believe in God and the Last Day," when they believe not."[1533] Thus, God has declared that what people say with their tongues will not be belief if their hearts oppose what they say. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1524] This is a reference to the Karrāmīs. Rudolph points out that the local Abū Muṭīʿ al-Nasafī (d. 318/930) was an adherent to this theological stance. See Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand*, 85-86.

[1525] Q. 5:41.

[1526] Q. 49:14.

[1527] Q. 49:17.

[1528] Q. 60:10.

b) Then, God, Mighty and Majestic, promised the believers perpetual rewards and stated that the hypocrites would be in the lowest degree of Hell. If that which [the hypocrites] were expressing was really belief, then according to what has been promised, their due right would be Paradise, and not a punishment greater than that of the disbelievers. Again, God Most High says: "They think to beguile God and those who believe, [and they beguile none save themselves]."[1534] [In this verse], God describes the belief expressed by the hypocrites as trying to beguile God. So, whoever claims that the rank of the religion of Islam and the belief in the prophets, in God, and in what He sent with them results in trying to beguile God has spoken a grave word about His religion and he is ignorant of his Lord.[1535] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1529] Q. 9:56.

[1530] Q. 4:65.

[1531] Q. 4:25.

[1532] Q. 4:25.

[1533] Q. 2:8.

[1534] Q. 2:9.

[1535] If belief was just profession, then it makes believers equal to the hypocrites and liable to the same condemnation mentioned in the Qur'an.

God, Mighty and Majestic, says: "Whether you ask forgiveness for them or ask not forgiveness for them [is all one for them; God will not forgive them]";[1536] "Ask forgiveness for them (O Muḥammad), or ask not forgiveness for them"[1537]; and, "And naught prevents that their contributions should be accepted from them save that they have disbelieved in God and in His messenger, [and they come not to worship save as idlers, and pay not (their contribution) save reluctantly]."[1538] God has also stated in other verses that hypocrites are disbelievers. Unbelief is the opposite of belief, and with belief, we cease disbelief. Again, God Most High says: "If they cease (from persecution of believers) that which is past will be forgiven them";[1539] and "whosoever does this shall pay the penalty"[1540] until the end of these verses.

The fact that the hypocrites are actually disbelievers and liars in their words has been proven by what God has said: "God bears witness that the hypocrites indeed are speaking falsely"[1541] and, "On the day when God will raise them all together, [then will they swear unto Him as they (now) swear unto you, and they will fancy that they have some standing. Lo! is it not they who are the liars?]"[1542] Thus, God has declared that [the hypocrites] are liars and considered it a lie when they say, "We are Muslims" even though they deny it with their hearts. Whoever accepts this statement of theirs as belief, which linguistically means assent, considers a thing to be its opposite, which is false.

Again, [God] has said: "Make no excuse. You have disbelieved after your (confession of) belief";[1543] "They will swear by God unto you, when you return unto them, [that you may let them be]";[1544] and, "[They say: "If we return to Medina], surely the more honourable (element) will expel therefrom the meaner." But honor belongs to God and His Apostle, and to the believers; but the hypocrites know not."[1545] [In these verses], He has stated that [the hypocrites] are disbelievers and that they do not know who deserves honor. Rather, it is for those who have been mentioned, and that if [the hypocrites] were of them [i.e., of the believers], they would also be honored. *Strength comes from God alone.* In addition, God has described that [attitude] of the hypocrites as mockery, deception and ridicule, obligating them to be punished for that. This, however, cannot be the nature of belief [i.e., ridicule etc.] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1536] Q. 63:6.
[1537] Q. 9:80.
[1538] Q. 9:54.
[1539] Q. 8:38.
[1540] Q. 25:68.
[1541] Q. 63:1.
[1542] Q. 58:18.
[1543] Q. 9:66.
[1544] Q. 9:95.
[1545] Q. 63:9.

c) Again, God has said: "... save him who is forced thereto and whose heart is still content with belief..."[1546] [In this verse], God did not consider the words of disbelief uttered with the tongue as disbelief if they did not express the state of the heart and one invalidated that [disbelief] with the belief of the heart. So, it has been established that the heart is the place of belief. *God alone leads to success.*

d) The practice of fighting until [one's opponent] utters the word of testimony with his tongue does not indicate that [testimony with the tongue] constitutes belief or that belief is not with the heart. On the contrary, the fact that people utter [the word of testimony with the tongue] is the evidence and expression of [the belief in the heart]. Thus, their statements [that they are believers] are accepted in relation to the external rulings as truthful expressions because we have no way of knowing the reality of it. Within the frame [of this principle], the general affairs amongst people are evaluated according to the knowledge that may be obtained, even if the inner aspects of these affairs are different. Also, [the matter of belief] that we have explained reveals this truth. Such is the traditional method of distinguishing believers from disbelievers through symbols, dress styles, or family relationships, although these are not in themselves disbelief or Islam. The same holds true of expression with the tongue. This is the same as what we have explained from the verses of the scriptural texts in terms of the knowledge of belief and the [inner aspects] of the hearts. So, such is the case with the issue of which we have been speaking. *God knows best.*

This is the basis to assess the situation of one who was forced into disbelief and the statement of the Prophet of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, "A person's tongue only expresses what lies in his heart".[1547] Matters of property, witnessing and the various teachings of religions are determined based on the knowledge obtained from their outward aspects. This is also the case with the ruling on accepting a thing. In fact, God commanded [the Muslims] to fight [non-Muslims] to pay the jizya[1548] and to let them stay among them until they hear His words.[1549]

[1546] Q. 16:106.

So, this leaving [off from fighting non-Muslims] is so they can live among Muslims, observe their affairs, reflect on their rulings, and ultimately learn their truths. In fact, the establishment of these truths, including the reconciliation of hearts, and the elimination of mutual injustice and various mischiefs, is always thanks to God. [As a result of their observations], the hearts of [non-Muslims] will embrace belief and their souls will accept Islam. The same applies to those who outwardly seem to believe in God and accept the call of believers to His rulings. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, the following is said to them: If the belief they uttered with the tongue and accepted in relation to the external rulings was evidence that belief consists of confessing with the tongue alone, why were they deprived of forgiveness and the constant blessings and abundant rewards that have been promised for belief? Then, the fact that their worship is impermissible [i.e., unacceptable in the sight of God] and that they cannot achieve the favor of God is evidence that they are not believers. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, the following is said to them [i.e., to those who hold that belief consists of utterance by the tongue]: God, Mighty and Majestic, says: "O you who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are near to you";[1550] "Wage war on all of the idolaters";[1551] and, "Slay the idolaters wherever you find them,."[1552] [As revealed in these verses], the disbelievers are fought on account of the idolatry and disbelief they express regardless of what they hide [in their hearts]. However, this does not necessitate that idolatry and disbelief are not within the hearts. It is not far-fetched that it has been commanded to fight them until they believe. Then, if they express their belief with their tongues, they will not be fought anymore, even though the place of faith is really the heart, because this [state of affairs] does not prevent belief from being realized there. *God alone leads to success.*

[1547] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *al-Īmān*, 54; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, *al-Adab*, 35.

[1548] See Q. 9:29.

[1549] See Q. 9:6.

[1550] Q. 9:123.

[1551] Q. 9:36.

[1552] Q. 9:5.

Then, the following is said to them: In the report, it is stated, "I have been commanded to fight people until they say, "There is no god but God.""[1553] It is also said, "...until people bear witness..." So, the two professions (*shahādatān*) are not the reality of belief; rather, they are the cause that prevents one being killed. *God alone leads to success.*

ii) As for the rational evidence [that belief is not really the profession of the tongue, but the assent of the heart], it is as follows: it is because [a given belief] is a religion, as religions are that which are believed. The heart is that [organ] in which the beliefs of religions are realized. Such is [also] the case with their teachings. In addition, belief linguistically means assent. The reality of [belief], which rejects any subjugation and coercion, is the religion[1554] in the heart because no creature may control [another's] heart. The summary of this is that it is possible that someone does not have a tongue, but it is not possible to remove the true religion, nor belief in God and the messengers, from anyone. Thus, it has been established that [the place where belief takes place] is the heart. In addition, the following is impossible: removing the act of belief from the person tested in the state of divine address due to [that very] state and due to [their own] tongue. For [in that case], most of the time, the divine address would pass over people without [them having performed] the act of belief.[1555] On the contrary, it is forbidden for one to say, "I believe in the scriptures, the prophets, and resurrection after death..." in certain states, for example during the ritual prayer. Thus, the act of belief would be prohibited [while one is praying] and the religion of Islam is such that [doing so] would spoil his worship.[1556] However, God has stipulated [the act of belief] as a condition for [the fulfillment of worship] and has made it permanent so that it cannot be changed or abrogated. So, it has been established that belief is not what the Karrāmīs thought to be. In other words, God Most High has elevated the level of belief in the hearts, even made it the highest degree, thus describing it as a foundation through which good deeds happen and worship is valid. What I am talking about may only be the hearts, and not the tongues. That is why hearts are the worthiest organ [for belief].

[1553] For the hadith, see al-Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ*, *al-Īmān*, 17; Muslim, *Saḥīḥ*, *al-Īmān*, 8.

[1554] Reading *al-dīn* with MS. 195r and K, 377.

[1555] As al-Māturīdī goes on to show, he has in mind someone who is in a state of worshipful response to God that keeps him from pronouncing the testification of faith.

[1556] The argument here is that making belief consist of profession upon the tongue undermines belief in many contexts in which that profession cannot be constantly made, including for example within acts of worship.

Then, the divine address for belief is required by reason, and the reality of belief is known through thinking and reflection, which are works of the hearts. The same is true of belief [i.e., it is the heart's action]. In addition, the tongue may be used and subjected to compulsion just like any of the other organs. However, God Most High has said, "There is no compulsion in religion."[1557] Thus, it is impossible for the truth of religion to be in the thing [i.e., the tongue] in which there is compulsion. Again, God Most High has said: "And he who rejects false deities and believes in God..."[1558] Rejecting false deities (*ṭāghūt*) is not just with the tongue – neither is belief. One should consider His words: "Have you not seen those who pretend [that they believe in that which is revealed unto you and that which was revealed before you, how they would go for judgment (in their disputes) to false deities] when they have been ordered to abjure them?" [1559] Thus, "going for judgment" means abandoning belief, [and this does not change] even if one claims that he believes in the things that must be believed. *God alone leads to success.*

In God's Book, there is the address in more than one place, "O you who believe." Then, none who ascribed themselves to Islam and belief doubted that he was included [as one of the believers]. However, one does not use his tongue in the act of belief during that address. So, it is established that the reality of belief, through which God names people "believers", is present in them during the address, and that truth may only be found in the heart. *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) In this matter, there are verses that refute [the notion of belief] as understood by the Mu'tazila, Khawārij, Karrāmīs and Ḥashwīs, despite the

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[1557] Q. 2:256.
[1558] Q. 2:256.
[1559] Q. 4:60.

disagreement among their teachings. In fact, He says: "O you who believe! Why do you say that which you will not do? [It is most hateful in the sight of God that you say that which you do not do. Lo! God loves them who battle for His cause in ranks,] as if they were a solid structure";[1560] "O you who believe! What ails you that when it is said unto you: Go forth in the way of God, [you are bowed down to the ground with heaviness?];[1561] "How should you not fight for the cause of God and of the feeble among men [and of the women and the children who are crying: Our Lord! Bring us forth from out this town of which the people are oppressors! Oh, give us from Your presence some protecting friend! Oh, give us from Your presence some defender!]";[1562] and, "Is not the time ripe for the hearts of those who believe to submit to God's reminder [and to the truth which is revealed?]"[1563] Thus, God, Mighty and Majestic, rebuked them for what they did and made a grave threat in this matter. But He did not remove from them the name "belief". On the contrary, He rebuked them by that name. Likewise, according to reason, reproaching for faults occurs among friends, whereas arguments and wars happen among enemies. Thus, it has become clear that the name "belief" is retained for them, and the view of those who expelled them from belief and regarded them as disbelievers is false.

Likewise, no one doubted that these verses [which address one saying, "O you who believe!"] include one among those who have confirmed God and His Messenger. So, it has been established that "belief" is a name with a known definition, and that their tongues may neglect it. Thus, the view that belief is the name for all acts of obedience is false. In addition, this address [as "believers"] was made despite abandoned obligations [such as the jihad]. If belief were the name of all [obedience], they would be addressed as follows: "O you who believe partly!" or "O you who believe with this exception!" Also, no rebuke is made using the title "righteous" and "pious" [as there would be no reason to rebuke such people]. Thus, it has been established that belief is not the title of all worship, but a specific worship [pertaining to the heart]. Then, not any of those [Muslims] at the time of the revelation of the verse is known to have treated the tongue as [the site for belief]. Hence, it has been established that the naming [of someone "believer"] is not on the basis of [profession with the tongue]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1560] Q. 61:2-4.

[1561] Q. 9:38.

[1562] Q. 4:75.

[1563] Q. 57:16.

8.2. Enquiry: [Assent and Knowledge in Belief]

A group thought that the act of assent would not happen with the heart, and only the act of knowing specifically would happen with it. However, the basic principle is that [the act of assent is with the heart], even if this can only be indicated in detail by means of indications from well-known words. Belief linguistically means assent whereas disbelief is denial or concealment. The opposite of knowledge in reality is a lack of knowledge, or ignorance. Not everyone who is ignorant of something or fails to know it is a liar. This is as [God] says, "You are folk unfamiliar to me (*munkarūn*)",[1564] that is, you are not known. Likewise, one who does not know the truth is not qualified to be a denier of it. Thus, in reality, there is [an assent] in the heart that is other than knowledge. However, knowledge is a cause that leads to assent, whereas ignorance often leads to denial. So, the meaning of each is not truly that of the other.

On this basis, the saying of whoever says, "Belief is knowledge" is that belief is only assent when there is the knowledge that leads to it. So, [belief] is named by [knowledge] just as it is described as "God's benevolence, blessing and mercy, etc." because [belief] is gained through these. Otherwise, it is not because belief is actually the act of God. Rather, since the reality [of belief] is not independent of [His action], it is attributed to Him. The same holds true of the ascription of knowledge [i.e., belief is not knowledge, but it is attributed to knowledge because it is reached through knowledge]. This is also similar to calling the believer's mistake [i.e., sin] "ignorance", and the sin of the disbeliever "forgetfulness". Likewise, the believer's [sin] is called ignorance because he has made a mistake[1565] due to

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[1564] Q. 15:62.

[1565] The Arabic of this sentence appears in both editions as follows: *wa-kadhālika [amr] al-mu'min bimā kāna 'alā al-jahāla ta'ẓīm mā* (K, 381, TA, 478). The word *ta'ẓīm* (glorification) is probably a misreading, and I think it should be *yukhṭi' fīmā yaḥullu bihi* (makes a mistake) (*Translator*).

[ignorance] in himself or forgetfulness, or because every forgetful person is abandoned, so he is named with it rather than the actual name [i.e., of sin]. *God alone leads to success.*

So, although one does not say that he knows all the prophets with his heart, one may say that he believes in all prophets. Thus, His words: "Whosoever disbelieves in God after his belief – save him who is forced thereto and whose heart is still content with belief – [but whosoever finds ease in disbelief: on them is wrath from God. Theirs will be an awful doom]."[1566] If there were only knowledge in the heart, disbelief would not remove that knowledge [because one continues to know what he denies] and the condition [of being content with belief] in the verse would not mean anything. As a matter of fact, one may choose what he does not find right in order to remove coercion from himself. Here, the condition is that his heart be content with belief. Such is His dialogue with Abraham: "[When He said to Abraham:] Do you not believe? [Abraham] said: Yes, [but (I ask) in order that my heart may be at ease.]'"[1567] [God] only said: Do you not believe in my report or in what you know? [So, Abraham] said: Yes. God did not say, "Do you not know?" *Strength comes from God alone.*

Through some means[1568], knowledge of some things may happen, while belief in them may not occur. Again, God says: "And he who rejects false deities and believes in God..."[1569] So, one's rejection of false deities in what he invokes and his belief in God are not realized just through words [i.e., as it would be in the case of coercion], but is realized through the reality of denying and belying [false deities] with the heart and accepting and assenting to God. The principle in this matter is the widely accepted [precept]: "One who is ignorant of something does not need to deny it, nor does one who knows something need to assent to it." Nevertheless, knowledge leads to assent, just as ignorance leads to denial. Thus, [belief] is called [knowledge] not because the former is really the latter, but because latter causes the former. *God knows best.*

[1566] Q. 16:106.

[1567] Q. 2:260.

[1568] I think it would be more accurate to read the phrase *bi-lā asbāb* (without any causes or means) in K, 382 and TA, 479 as *bi-l-asbāb* (through some means) (*Translator*).

[1569] Q. 2:256.

8.3. Enquiry: [Deferring Judgment on the Major Sinner]

Then, although the linguists agree that the word "deferral" (*al-irjā'*) means postponement, there is disagreement about the sense in which the "deferrer" (*murji'*) is so named. The word is used [in the lexical meaning] in the following verses: "They said: detain (*arjih*) him and his brother, [and send into the cities summoners]" [1570] and, "[(There are) others] who are held in suspension (*murjawna*) until God's decree."[1571]

1) The Ḥashwis said: The reason why these people are called the "Murji'a" is that they do not name all good deeds "belief" [and hence "defer" this name]. However, it is impossible for this explanation to be correct on either linguistic or rational grounds. It is incorrect on linguistic grounds, because deferral means to postpone. Thus, there is no basis for associating this name [i.e., "deferral"] with the attitude of naming every good deed by its specific name and refraining from using this general name [i.e., "belief"].

i) Then, this [i.e., belief] is either really the name for every good act, or it is not.

a) Now, if [the term "belief"] is the name [of every good deed], then one who avoids naming something by its real name either does so because of his ignorance or his obstinacy. However, no one calls [every good deed] by this name [i.e., "belief"], so why do they alone [i.e., the Ḥashwis] name it such specifically among people? If one must be named ["Murji'"] because of this, then this [label] should be given to [the Ḥashwīs]. This is because when they name [every good deed "belief"], they discard the unique names of things. Thus, [the Ḥashwīs] are deserving of this name [i.e., Murji']. Then, by saying, "Belief is the name of the sum of good deeds," there is a nullification of this name from every good action considered individually, and this is necessary for them.

b) Or [the name "belief"] is not really [the name of all good deeds]. Accordingly, there is no basis for naming a thing by that which is not its name. Thus, it would be to name the righteous people by a religiously defamed title according to [God]. Hence, [the Ḥashwī] has raised the rank of liars in the sight of God and has lowered the rank of the truthful. This is a grave act in the view of one who has an intellect.

[1570] Q. 26:36.

[1571] Q. 9:106.

ii) As for the reason, it perceives the realities of things in two ways:

a) Through the faculties of perception placed in the body, that is, through the data obtained with the senses.

b) Or, through reflecting on sensory knowledge and what is most apparent from evidence. However, no sensory data supports [the view that] the reality of deferral is for whoever does not name all good deeds "belief", nor does this view involve any knowledge obtained by reflection. *Strength comes from God alone.* On the contrary, the reality is that [i.e., deferral] is their teaching [i.e., the Ḥashwīs] when they defer their religion and do not bear witness to themselves [as believers] by saying, "God willing [we are believers]". *Strength comes from God alone.*

2) The Muʿtazila said: The Murjiʾa are those who defer the judgment on major sins and do not consider those who have committed these sins as belonging to Hell or Paradise.

The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: What [the Muʿtazila] have said about the connection of deferral on such actions is true [i.e., this is indeed the position of the Murjiʾa]. However, if the narration of blaming is established, the group blamed in the narration is not [the Murjiʾa].[1572] That is the correct opinion. In this way, Abū Ḥanīfa (may God have mercy on him) was once asked, "From where did you get "deferral?"" He said: I took it from the action of the angels when it was said to them, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful..."[1573] That is, when [the angels] were asked about something they did not know, they deferred the matter to God. This is the correct attitude towards those who have committed major sins, when they also have good deeds. If one of those good deeds is put against all evils except polytheism, it will destroy and abolish all of them. Thus, it is impossible for those who commit major sins to be deprived of [forgiveness] and subjected to the eternal torment of Hell. Instead, their case is deferred to God, and if He wills, He will forgive them, for He has not deprived him of knowing Himself, nor has He deprived him of considering His enemies to be his enemies, and glorifying His friends, while committing [the sin]. Thus, the servant hopes that He will not deprive him of His forgiveness and grace when he desperately needs them. *God alone leads to success.* For [God] has said that He is the pardoning, the forgiving, the merciful and the loving. If He wills, He causes the good deeds He bestowed on His servant to counterbalance his evil deeds and makes them an expiation for him. As He says: "Good deeds annul ill-deeds."[1574] In another place, He says: "We will expiate your evil deeds."[1575] God has mentioned the kinds [of good deeds] thanks to which He has promised to expiate your sins. *Strength comes from God alone.* That is like His statement: "Those are they from whom We accept the best of what they do and overlook their evil deeds. [(They are) among the owners of the Garden]";[1576] "And as for those who believe and do good works, We shall expiate their evil deeds [and shall repay them the best that they did]."[1577] There are other verses with similar content. *God knows best.* If God wills, He punishes the sinner in proportion to his sin, but also repays the good deeds he has done: "Now, whoever does a mote's weight of good will see his reward..."[1578] [God has stated] in other verses that He will reward the servant for his good and bad deeds. This is the quality of justice in punishing [i.e., not punishing more than the sin committed], but He rewards more than what is due. *God alone leads to success.* This kind of "deferral" is right, and it must be accepted.

[1572] See below.

[1573] Q. 2:31.

The Muʿtazila deferred naming one who committed a major sin a believer or a disbeliever, such that their ignorance about his reality led them to require deferral of his name [i.e., as "believer" or "disbeliever"]. Here, [the Muʿtazilī] is ignorant of the reality of [the major sinner's] act, so there is no excuse for him. However, the first one [i.e., the Murji'a] is ignorant about what God will do to [the one who commits a major sin], and this is known only through the tradition. Yet nothing has come that gives a definitive verdict on this issue. Thus, it is necessary [to leave the judgment to God in this matter].

[1574] Q. 11:114.
[1575] Q. 4:31.
[1576] Q. 46:16.
[1577] 'Q. 29:7.
[1578] Q. 99:7.

3) Some have said that the Murji'a are those who defer the judgment to God [i.e., of which party is right] regarding the matter of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and those who fought with him and against him. If those who hold this view mean by "deferral" suspending judgment when speaking about them, then there is no distinction between that [i.e., "deferral"] from other than it [i.e., the general practice of Muslims]. But if they mean the deferral that is blamed [i.e., in the reports], then that is a more likely [interpretation] because no one is equal to ʿAlī in deserving [the caliphate after ʿUmar].[1579] In addition, there is an indication in a report known[1580] in the time of Abū Bakr, may God be pleased with him, that the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "If Abū Bakr becomes your ruler, you will find him weak in his body and strong in his religion. If your ruler is ʿUmar, you will find him strong in both his body and his religion. If your ruler is ʿAlī, you will find him guiding and guided, leading you on the right path."[1581] Or [the Prophet], upon him be peace, used a similar expression. Then, ʿUmar included ʿAlī in the consultation [i.e., for his successor], and the elite of the companions agreed on [ʿAlī]. Thus, [ʿAlī's] situation [i.e., his deservedness in the case of the caliphate] is not concealed such that it is excused to let someone say, "One may [not] reproach those who [practice deferral on this question]". For those who [said that they did not know if ʿAlī was most deserving to be caliph after ʿUmar] were ignorant about something that one would only be ignorant of due to heedlessness and lack of reflection about the matter of religion.[1582] *God alone leads to success.*

[1579] The reference to ʿUmar's consultation below provides a clear indication that the debate here is over ʿAlī's suitability as a successor to ʿUmar in the context of the committee formed by the latter, not the initial decision to select Abū Bakr.

[1580] Reading *maʿrūf* from a marginal note on MS. 198r. It may also be "elevated" (*marfūʿ*), i.e., with a chain of transmitters that reach to the Prophet, which is the initial reading on the manuscript and in TA, 482. This word is repeated at the beginning of (4).

[1581] For similar narrations, see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍāil al-ṣaḥāba,* 1:231.

[1582] In summary, al-Māturīdī's position seems to be as follows. Relating deferral (*irjāʾ*) to political affairs of early Islam can be understood in different ways. He thinks it is unlikely to refer to suspending judgment on those companions who sided with ʿAlī and against him in battle, which probably refers to the Battle of the Camel, though it could also apply to the conflict with Muʿāwiya at Ṣiffīn. The reason for this is that the Murji'a are usually considered a blameworthy group, yet this kind of deferral is entirely praiseworthy. This accords with al-Māturīdī's positive outlook on correctly applied suspension of judgment (*waqf*). He therefore thinks that a second possibility is more likely, which is that it is blameworthy to defer judgment over whether ʿAlī

4) Then, if the "elevated"[1583] report [i.e., with a chain of transmitters reaching to the Prophet] is established that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "My intercession [with God] does not reach two groups of people from my community: the Qadarīs and the Murji'a,"[1584] as well as what is mentioned that the Murji'a were cursed by seventy tongues, then it may be understood in two ways (God knows best):

i) What is meant by [the Murji'a here] may be the Determinists, because they are joined with the former [in the report]. They are two opposing doctrines that the report unites in condemnation. In other words, the Qadarīs attribute the determination of creatures' actions to creatures and do not give any place to God's will and governance of these actions. On the other hand, the Determinists "defer" [these actions] to God Most High and attribute no reality (*ḥaqīqa*) to the creatures in them at all. Thus, the Determinists attribute all evil and blameworthy things to God, and He is majestic and elevated above His actions being described thus. Conversely, the Qadarīs attributed actions to creatures, even though they were ignorant of them. However, the truth lies in the middle of these two views: actions emerge from the servants as they are from them,[1585] and God creates them according to their present definition. *God alone leads to success.* We have explained the meaning of the Qadarīs in previous chapters.[1586]

ii) What is meant by the Murji'a mentioned in the narration may be that one suspends judgment about his own act and hesitates. In fact, the Ḥashwīs adopted such a hesitant attitude about the name "believer" and said, "God willing I am a believer". As is known, "deferral" is to suspend judgment in answering and to take one's time to reflect. Then, [the Ḥashwīs] do not say

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was the most suitable successor to ʿUmar as caliph, as he thinks that this matter was very clear. The omission of the name of ʿUthmān here, as well as from al-Māturīdī's *tafsīr*, is pointed, though he should not thereby be read as repudiating the validity of his caliphate. See also al-Māturīdī's rejection of al-Kaʿbī's portrayal of Marwanid anti-ʿAlī polemic as lies in 6.17 (3).

[1583] Or "known", see above.

[1584] For the hadith, see al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr*, 4:208. Also see al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan, al-Qadar*, 13; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan, al-Muqaddima*, 9.

[1585] Reading *ʿalā mā hiya minhum*. Or it may be assumed that the word "whatness" (*māʾiyya*) has been incorrectly copied on MS. 198v, giving the more technical: "upon a whatness from them" (*ʿalā māhiyya minhum*).

[1586] See 6.16-6.18 in particular.

about themselves that they are definitely believers. On the contrary, they say, "God willing, we are believers", which is deferral. That has been mentioned in some reports, but their correctness has not been recognized. [If we cannot settle this through tradition,] we may also determine the meaning of deferral rationally, since it is suspending judgment on a given matter – [here] in regard to their own action [i.e., belief]. What the Muʿtazila hold about the deferral of the major sinner is over whether to name him a believer or a disbeliever. In reality, tested creatures were divided into two: believer and disbeliever. A third category was made, the hypocrite, because [the hypocrite] is with [the believers] outwardly and with [the disbelievers] in secret. Thus, within the frame [of the practice] adopted by religious people in the world, they apparently deserve the rulings of the people of belief, yet inwardly, they are subject to the rules required by the state of disbelief in terms of the Hereafter. *God alone leads to success.*

[8.4. The Createdness of Belief]

1) As for the debate between us and a group from the Ḥashwīs over the createdness of belief, although we have made an explanation about the createdness of the actions of the servants, it does not suffice for one who reflects on the issue of belief. So let us say: belief is either known or not known. If it is not known, no one may know it. Accordingly, we say: This statement of one who denies that belief has been created is meaningless. This is because the creation is that which one is ignorant thereof until God connects one to knowledge of it by means of evidence, making in it something to bear witness to him such that its whatness and reality are known. This is what creation is in general. The sensible world indicates that everything other than God has been created, that is, it came into existence after it did not exist. As for God Most High and what He is ascribed with, there is evidence in the visible world for verification and affirmation, so there is no reason to fail to know God. This establishes that [belief] has been created.[1587]

[1587] In other words, if belief is something that is knowable, then it is either something we come across through evidence, which is, by definition, a temporal creation, or it is God and His attributes. As it is belief in God, not God Himself, it is part of the creation.

In addition, it is impossible to be ignorant of [belief] because His command [to believe] is contained in all His revealed scriptures and [in the words] of all the messengers He sent. Thanks to [belief], servants are subject to all Laws of Islam [in all ages]. Thus, it is impossible for [the servants] to know [the Law] whilst remaining ignorant of the reality of that through which the obligation is realized and the test is conducted [i.e., the truth of belief]. Glad tidings came down on [the basis of belief], and warnings and promises came about being unaware of belief. The Muslim community, despite the disagreements among them, agreed to ascribe [belief] according to what people understood. So, the knowledge [of belief] has been established.

2) Then, since [belief] is known, everyone's belief is characterized by either existing in eternity or coming into existence after it did not exist. If it is to be characterized as existing in eternity, [belief] must be described by something that must be rejected rationally and is impossible according to tradition, because it is impossible for one's belief to exist as an act before one's own existence. The evidence for the fact that belief is an action of the servant is that belief has been commanded, disbelief has been forbidden, those who believe have been promised reward, and those who turn away from belief have been threatened with punishment. All this is impossible for other than an action. Then, there is a disclosure in the Qur'an about those who come forth with [belief], the naming of it as an action, and the naming of its possessor. What is reasonable in this matter is that the [servant] bears witness to the oneness of God and believes in His messengers, has conviction of that, and it is his act. If it were not his act, then [belief] would [still] have been considered created just like everything the generation of which the servant is not involved in according to everyone. If belief is the act of the servant, then according to those who accept this doctrine, all his actions are created. We have explained this in what has preceded.[1588] Hence, belief is like [those actions], and it is even more worthy of being described as created than the servant's other actions, as it is the highest and most valuable of them. It is inappropriate to describe the Lord as the creator of mean and filthy things, while excluding Him from creating sublime and beautiful things. Accordingly, one who describes God in this way is

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1588 See 6.3.

worse than the Zoroastrians and the Zindiqs, because they attribute the creation of good deeds to God and negate the creation of evil from Him. These [i.e., the Mu'tazila], on the other hand, reject [God's] creation of belief, which is the highest of good deeds. Also, among them [i.e., the Ḥashwis] are those who regard all good deeds as belief.[1589] However, they think that God did not create belief. So, according to what this person says, He is the creator of all evil, but He is not the creator of good at all. God is majestic above this quality.

3) Then, either the means people have to obtain knowledge on this subject are:

i) Only tradition [i.e., through the revealed scriptures], and reason has no role in this process. Hence, it must be said unrestrictedly that belief has been created. For God says, "[God is the] creator of all things."[1590] [Belief], on the other hand, is something other than God, so it must be accepted that belief has been created. Or it should be accepted that belief has been created because it is one of the deeds [of human beings], for God Most High says, "God created you and what you do."[1591] [Belief] is expressed verbally, taking place as the heart's action without the involvement of other organs. In fact, God Most High says: "And whether you hide Your word or publish it, He certainly has (full) knowledge, of the secrets of (all) hearts. Should He not know, He that created? And He is the one that understands the finest mysteries (and) is well-acquainted (with them)."[1592] Thus, belief falls under the category of "thingness" in the first verse above [and in this respect it has been created by Him because He is the creator of all things]. In the second verse, [belief] is in the category of [human] actions [and it has been created in this aspect because God created human actions]. Again, belief [expressed in the third verse] is from the category of things we hide and reveal [therefore, it has been created in that aspect, too]. In addition, there are things in the heavens and the earth that have not been mentioned by name as being created, which are also included in the category of things created by God, as we have explained. For instance, in His words: "The one who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between [them in six Days, then He mounted the Throne...]"[1593] Likewise, belief is from the category of things that are between [the heavens and the earth]. *God alone leads to success.*

[1589] See 8.3 (1).

[1590] Q. 6:102; Q. 40:62.

[1591] Q. 37:96.

[1592] Q. 67:13-14.

ii) Or reason has a role in knowing [that belief has been created]. Accordingly, the traces and signs of bringing into existence and creation, which exist in all other creatures, also exist in belief. So, it has become necessary to unite belief [in the category of createdness] with other beings by means of reflection. Additionally, [belief] is generated for the servant in his created state. Thus, the createdness of things [i.e., such as belief] is known because they come into existence after they did not exist.

On the other hand, let us pose a question that explains the truth [of belief] to those who deny [that belief has been created]: Is belief an assent, a profession, all deeds, profession and knowledge, or something else? The adversary must therefore accept one of these alternatives, for the adversary may be challenged with each of them. *Strength comes from God alone.*

It is reported in this matter that the Messenger of God, upon him be peace, said: "God created belief, and then wrapped it with generosity and modesty."[1594] It is also narrated that God created one hundred mercies.[1595] It is known that belief is named "mercy". Thus, in the locus where belief has been created [i.e., the heart] there must be a contrary that rejects belief and a similar that supports it and is compatible with it. Anything contrary or similar is a creature.[1596] Then, belief is the way on which one walks, it is the religion that has been adopted, it is the doctrine that has been chosen, and it is the faith that has been believed, and all of these have been created. Then, God Most High once took a tree as a similitude for belief, once hearing and seeing, once life, once pure earth, and once the lamp. All these [exemplary things] have been created. Thus, belief itself has been created.

[1593] Q. 25:59.

[1594] For the hadith, see al-Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 1:302-303, no. 897.

[1595] See al-Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ*, *al-Riqāq*, 19; Muslim, *Saḥīḥ*, *al-Tawbah*, 18-21; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, *al-Da'awāt*, 99; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, *al-Zuhd*, 35.

[1596] That is, the existence of such similars as generosity, modesty and other mercies are signs of created beings. This relies on his ideas of the constitution of bodies in his physical ontology, showing that he sees belief as a dispositional accident generated by the heart as its action. See 2.2.1.3 (5).

Then, He cited the opposites of what we mentioned as an example for disbelief and these share in temporality and createdness. Thus, belief and disbelief are alike [in their createdness]. *God alone leads to success.*

Then, belief is beautiful, good, right guidance and an ornament for its owner. Everything that has these qualities is created. God Most High says: "But God has endeared the faith to you and has beautified it in your hearts."[1597] Then, He said, "The faith has not yet entered into your hearts";[1598] and, "But their hearts believe not..."[1599] These verses indicate that belief is in the heart and that it is its action. It is far-fetched for a thing that is not created to exist in the heart. Then, in these verses, God Most High belied a group claiming [faith] for themselves. If belief had not been their action, He would not have belied them, since [belief] would be an existent, just not an action.[1600] *God alone leads to success.*

8.5. Enquiry: [Exception in Belief]

1) The Jurist (may God have mercy on him) said: The principle according to us [for the servant's belief to be valid] is that he must say that he has definitely believed, he must name himself unrestrictedly with belief and should make no exceptions [e.g., saying "God willing, I am a believer"]. This is because if complete belief is realized only when its aggregate meaning exists, then it is not correct when a part of it is excepted. Thus, such is the case with [belief] in summary. In fact, if one says the following, [his belief will not be valid]: "God willing, I bear testimony that there is no god but God" or, "God willing, Muḥammad is the Messenger of God." The same holds true of confessing the tenets of resurrection after death, the angels, the messengers, and the scriptures. *Protection from error is by God.*

Again, a phrase of exception added to a statement invalidates what has preceded upon its pronouncement unless it is [stipulated as] part of the profession, contracts, and promises.[1601] Such is the case [with the profession of belief], as God, exalted is He, says: "And say not of anything: I shall do that tomorrow, except if God will."[1602] And He says: "God willing, you shall find me patient..."[1603] [In these two verses, the phrase of exception is not added to the statement] to describe its invalidation, since the phrase of exception is connected [to the promise made and not additional to it]. *God alone leads to success.*

[1597] Q. 49:7.

[1598] Q. 49:14.

[1599] Q. 5:41.

[1600] In other words, God explicitly denies belief as their action, which only makes sense if it is an action in the first place.

[1601] The Arabic sentence is as follows: *wa-ayḍan in ḥarf al-thunyā idhā ulḥiqa bi-l-qawl man' muḍiyyahu 'alā mā tafawwahu bihi lawlā huwa min al-iqrār*, according to MS.

Then, people do not use the phrase of exception as a linguistic convention in the context of comprehension and knowledge. Anyone who hears this usage finds it a grave statement. In fact, the same holds true of making an exception for something sensory [e.g., to say: "God willing, the weather is warm"]. People use exception in the context of doubt and suspicion. God Most High has warned [that there should be no doubt in belief] with His statement, "Afterwards, they doubt not",[1604] and described the hypocrites as people [stuck] in disbelief and doubt. So, one cannot make exceptions when it is impermissible to say, "I think, I assume, and I suspect [that it is such]." *God alone leads to success.*

Then, God, Mighty and Majestic, has testified that those who believe in Him, His Messenger and the Last Day are believers, saying, "The Messenger believes..."[1605] and He has praised firm belief with His statement, "Say we believe in God..."[1606] Then, in many contexts of worship, God made an address with the name "belief" [i.e., He said: "O you who believe, pray, give alms, etc."]. In addition, in the context of many permissible and forbidden things, [He addressed us with the name "belief"]. Then, no one has concluded that the name "belief" does not apply to himself in relation to that which God has made lawful and commanded by the name "belief", such that [he thinks] the intent concerns others exclusively. The same applies to the name "belief" [i.e., the believer thinks that God's address in the form "O you who believe!" includes him as well].

200v and K, 389. TA, 487, has changed *lawlā* to *kamā* and Topaloğlu rendered the meaning accordingly in his own Turkish translation (see al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, trans. Topaloğlu, 585). I think that what al-Māturīdī really meant has not been understood and expressed correctly. What he means is that if the phrase of exception is not made part of the main sentence uttered, the meaning is distorted (*Translator*).

[1602] Q. 18:23-24.

[1603] Q. 18:69.

[1604] Q. 49:15.

[1605] Q. 2:285.

[1606] Q. 2:136.

2) The principle in this matter is as follows: belief is attributed to God as something that He has given as a blessing, as in His statement Most High: "Show us the straight path, the path of those whom You have favored."[1607] Also, [belief is attributed to God as] something He has bestowed upon the servant, as in His words: "But God does confer a favor on you, [in as much as He has led you to belief, if you are earnest]."[1608] Then, as something He adorns and endears to the hearts, as in His words: "But God has endeared the faith to you and has beautified it in your hearts."[1609] Again, as something given by Him, as in His statement: "Had it not been for the grace of God and His mercy unto you, [not one of you would ever have grown pure]."[1610] So, one who makes an exception [to his confession of belief] either knows his own truthfulness and the greatness of God's blessings and favors on him, or he does not know this, or he knows that he is not like that [i.e., he knows that he is untruthful and a disbeliever]. If the [second option] is the case, it is unfortunate for him because the only benefit he will gain from the exception is to doubt about what he claims he does not know. Then, shame on him if he fails to know that he is truthful in what he says and is ignorant and ungrateful to the blessings of God. Finally, if he knows [that God has acted towards him with grace and benevolence] then [the phrase of exception] is an expression of doubt towards those who hear him that amounts to concealing God's blessings and ingratitude towards His gifts. This is the sign of annihilation and the cause of perishing. *God alone leads to success.*

3) Then, in our opinion, the principle is as follows: exception [i.e., the phrase "God willing"] is an expression that one uses when he is avoiding something. This [i.e., belief] is a context in which were [the purpose] of one's avoidance realized [i.e., doubt about being a believer], then the avoidance would not benefit him. On the contrary, it would incur God's anger and punishment. On the other hand, if the [purpose] of avoidance is not realized [i.e., one is a firm believer], then [by saying "God willing"] he acts ungratefully towards God's blessings because he fails to see that

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[1607] Q. 1:7.
[1608] Q. 49:17.
[1609] Q. 49:7.
[1610] Q. 24:21.

the blessings come from [God] and fails to give thanks for them.[1611] For [God] has made His friendship necessary for him and has attributed the act of bringing him out of darkness to light to Himself.[1612] *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, according to the opinion considered correct by the teachings of the Muʿtazila, Khawârij and Ḥashwis, the exception should be made in religion, especially in belief [i.e., one should say "God willing, I am a believer"]. According to the Muʿtazila and Khawārij, this is so because they hold that a servant may exit from [belief and religion] without even realizing it and may fail to fulfill a religious obligation without knowing it. In this case, the servant will remain in ignorance about his state forever [i.e., he cannot know that he is a believer]. Thus, he must not name himself with [belief]. Therefore, it has not been heard that one calls himself good, pious, purified, and obedient to God. For [belief] is a name for one of the two types of good deeds, or it is the name for good deeds as a whole. So, according to these people, [a servant] cannot be named by belief without exception. The Ḥashwīs also say this, as according to them, the judgment is the same for belief and for all the names of praise. They do not name by other than [disbelief] without making exceptions [and saying "God willing"]. So, it is necessary to make exceptions according to the teachings of this group.

Then, God Most High said, "O you who believe!" with a definite name in more than one place [in the Qur'an]. It is not possible that one [who makes his belief conditional] deserves any of the elements of command, prohibition, promise, threat, encouragement and warning mentioned in the [divine] address. Thus, the verses of God in the address would generally become futile. However, the correct group among all others is the one for which such a position is not necessary, no matter whether it openly embraces this result or not.[1613] *God alone leads to success.*

[1611] In other words, if one says, "God willing, I am a believer", he either has no belief or he has it. If he has no belief, this statement will not help him, because the punishment for disbelief is Hell. Even if he has belief, this statement is not appropriate. This is because it means to deny the existence of belief. Since belief is a blessing, it means denying that blessing (*Translator*).

[1612] See Q. 2:257.

[1613] It is incorrect for a group to adopt exception in belief even if its members do not accept this conclusion (*Translator*).

4) If one says: "God has mentioned the phrase of exception in a context other than that of doubt. Thus, exception is also used without doubt, as He says: "You shall indeed enter the Inviolable Place of Worship, if God wills, secure."[1614]

This is answered as follows: This cannot be [evidence] for you, because we have shown that your sect's conception of belief includes doubt. Then, there is not for you an argument to exit from doubt were you to be [so inclined]. In fact, in many contexts God has mentioned the people of certainty [i.e., those who firmly believe] with a definite name. So, [go ahead and] say, "[Belief] is not realized without exception."[1615] *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, it is said: [In the Qur'an], God Most High used the following expressions in the context of certainty: "assumption" (*al-ẓann*), "maybe" (*la'alla*), "hopefully" (*'asā*), "fear" (*al-khawf*). So, when one asks you, ["Are you a believer?"] say, "We assume, we fear, maybe" and so on! Now, if that that is not required because linguistic convention treats them differently [i.e., they imply conjecture and probability, and not certainty] – even if it could be objected that there is a possibility of using these in the context of certainty, such as "maybe" (*la'alla*)[1616] – the same is the case with exception.[1617]

Then, any statement that suggests exception with regard to belief in God and Muḥammad is opposed. This is just as it is impossible to say that people whose hearts do not believe are believers, and to describe them as such. It has been narrated that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, was asked as to which deed is the best, so he said: "[The best deed is] belief without doubt, jihad without the theft of booty, and a pilgrimage that has been accepted [by God]."[1618] God Most High says: "The (true) believers are those only who believe in God and His messenger and afterward doubt not..."[1619]

[1614] Q. 48:27.

[1615] Al-Māturīdī appears to be mocking the opponent for their view about exception in belief that he thinks leaves them unable to say anything with certainty.

[1616] See Q. 20:130.

[1617] The argument intends to highlight the absurdity of bringing up one instance of exception in Q. 48:27 to argue that it is acceptable to apply to belief. Al-Māturīdī acknowledges that certain expressions typically used for doubtfulness are sometimes employed in the Qur'an for certainty. He then sarcastically demands that his interlocutor uses them in the same way. If that is unacceptable, the same applies to exception.

[1618] Al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, *al-Zakāt*, 49.

5) If it is asked: What is the wisdom in His words: "You shall indeed enter the Inviolable Place of Worship, if God wills, secure."[1620]

The answer is as follows: We may interpret this verse in various ways and God knows best the reality of it:

i) This statement may be a report that expresses the words of another than God. In fact, He does not state, "You will enter, if I will". On the contrary, He says, "You shall enter, if God wills." Thus, it is understood that this statement does not belong to God, but to another [as reported speech].

ii) God may have taught His Messenger to say that and to make exceptions in what he promises. In fact, God Most High says: "And say not of anything: Lo! I shall do that tomorrow, except if God wills."[1621] "I shall" and "you shall enter" [in the two verses] are the same. No matter whether God promised this [to His Prophet] or not, He commanded him to mention the phrase of exception because He wanted to teach people the due right of promising, just as He commanded [the Prophet] to consult in order to teach people its importance.[1622]

iii) Or God attributed entering [the Inviolable Place of Worship] to [His Prophet] and promised this to him specifically or to whoever survived from them. So, the exception was made fearing the death of some of the addressees.

iv) Or [the phrase of exception] is part of His words, "God truly has fulfilled the vision for His Messenger."[1623] Thus, [the verse] may be understood in two ways:

a) [The Prophet] saw a vision [of his entrance to the Inviolable Place of Worship] adjoined to the exception, and that has been conveyed [in the verse].

1619 Q. 49:15.
1620 Q. 48:27.
1621 Q. 18:23-24.
1622 See Q. 3:159.
1623 Q. 48: 27.

b) Or the Messenger of God informed people that he would enter [the Inviolable Place of Worship] at a time that was not communicated to him, so he made an exception in that respect. That is the due right of things that are suspected and are not certainly known, as we have mentioned.

6) Whoever is sure of his religion and knows that he is sincere in his belief, who knows the definition of belief and that he fulfills it, then it is incumbent upon him to express it by being grateful for what has been bestowed on him by God [and he should not ungratefully say, "God willing, I am a believer"]. There is not in [saying that one is a believer in certain terms] a [claim] of purity because everyone shares in this. Other reasons [that require one to say that he is a believer in certain terms are as follows]:

i) For they have been commanded [to believe in this way, i.e., without exception].

ii) For the definition of belief is known [and it does not contain an ambiguity, so there is no need for the phrase of exception used in the context of uncertainty].

iii) For, thanks to his firm belief, one knows that the verses in the Qur'an that begin with, "O you who believe!" are addressed to him and that he is among those who have been addressed.

iv) For, one knows that when God names [His servants], He names them by the names they deserve.

v) For God, Mighty and Majestic, has stipulated certain rulings in the form of procedures and rights for people through the outward appearance of religion. In order to fulfill the rights with which people have been charged, it is necessary that there is an outward expression [of belief in definite terms]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

8.6. Enquiry [Islam and Belief][1624]

People have debated whether Islam in reality is the name for belief or something other than it.

1) Those who claim that belief is the name for all good deeds have differed [among themselves] in this matter, but their disagreement is that of those with similar opinions. In fact, their conflict is pointless because these people bring up His words Most High, "Whosoever seeks as religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him"[1625] as evidence, and they regard everything accepted as Islam, every good deed as belief, every acceptable thing as goodness, and every good deed as acceptable. Thus, [belief and good deeds] are one. However, they distinguish between [Islam and belief], using as an inference the Book's distinction: "The Bedouin Arabs say, "We believe." Say (unto them, O Muḥammad): You believe not, but rather say, "We submit," [for belief has not yet entered into your hearts]."[1626] Thus, [the Bedouins] were allowed to notify about their Islam, but not their belief. Likewise, in the story of Gabriel, when he asked the Messenger of God about belief, he answered: "[Belief is] that you believe in God, the angels, the scriptures, the messengers, the Last Day, and that the determination [of fate], its good and evil, comes from God." When [Gabriel] asked about Islam, he answered: "[Islam is] that you bear testimony that there is no god but God, establish prayers, give alms, fast during the month of Ramaḍān and visit the House [i.e., perform the hajj]." In the first case, [Gabriel] asked, "Am I a believer if I do this?", whereas, in the second, he asked, "Am I a Muslim?" [The Prophet] said, "Yes", [Gabriel said], "You speak truly."[1627] [Those who argue that every good deed is belief] said the

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[1624] The words "An enquiry appended to the text in a manuscript copy" (*mas'ala ulḥiqat bi-l-matn fī nuskha*) are included in the main body of MS. 202r. As expressed in TA, 491, n. 7, this suggests that the scribe of the manuscript was working with one or more additional textual witnesses to the book. Though the material in this enquiry is a good stylistic fit with what precedes it, there are a couple of unusual features that could suggest it is a continuation by a student, rather than by the master himself. First, there is nothing comparable to the analysis of hadith variants in 8.6 (4) anywhere else in the book. Second, introducing Qur'anic quotations with "in [Sura] Yūnus..." and "the angels said", does not follow al-Māturīdī's usual writing habits.

[1625] Q. 3:85.

[1626] Q. 49:14.

[1627] This version, with the additions "Am I a believer if I do this?" and "Am I a Muslim?"

following: So, the Qur'an, then the Sunna, then Gabriel's confirmation [in this matter], then the testification of the name [i.e., believer and Muslim] for the one who does that, then the [Prophet's], upon him be peace, saying, "This is Gabriel, and he has come to teach you your religion."[1628] It is impossible for the trustworthy of the heavens and the earth [i.e., Gabriel and the Prophet Muḥammad respectively] to come together to teach something by distinguishing it, yet the reality is that it is joined [i.e., not distinguished]. It has therefore been established that these two are distinguished.[1629]

2) Then, those who say that belief consists of assent and nothing else have differed about Islam [i.e., in this context].

i) Some of them are in agreement with those who regard Islam as a name for [actions] arising from closeness [to God], whereas belief is the name for assent specifically. [They] made an inference based on what I mentioned from the ruling of the Book and the Sunna that God allowed the Bedouin Arabs to call themselves by Islam outwardly, but He did not allow them to call themselves by belief, since belief did not exist in their hearts. Such is the case with the report [of Gabriel], since it reduced Islam to external deeds and belief to the assent to the above-mentioned [tenets]. This approach [to the relationship between Islam and belief] is closer to what is apparent than the first view [i.e., the people who identify belief with all good deeds] because the adherents of the first view did not attribute the name "Islam" to external deeds and the name "belief" to assent. On the contrary, they regarded Islam as both external and internal deeds together. Thus, they opposed all the evidence on which they [allegedly] relied. Also, if each of them was asked about the nature of belief, they would attribute it to all good deeds. Thus, with this attitude, they contradict the proofs they rely on from the Qur'an, as it identifies the locus of belief [in

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is not found in the most famous transmissions of the report. It is collected in al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-ṣughrā*, 2:45-46.

[1628] Al-Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ*, *al-Īmān*, 37; Muslim, *Saḥīḥ*, *al-Īmān*, 6-7; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, *al-Sunna*, 16; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, *al-Īmān*, 4; al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, *al-Īmān*, 5-6; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, *al-Muqaddima*, 9-10.

[1629] In other words, the argument of this group is that if Gabriel and the Prophet Muḥammad, the two most trustworthy creations of God, come together for the express purpose of distinguishing between belief and Islam, it is inconceivable that they are the same thing.

the heart], as well as the explanations of the trustworthy ones [i.e., Gabriel and the Prophet Muḥammad]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

ii) Our view of belief and Islam is as follows: these two are the same in terms of fulfilling the purpose in the matter of religion even if they differ in linguistic meaning. Since [the linguistic meaning of Islam is different from that of belief], the souls of disbelievers refused to be named by Islam, but none of them refused to be named by belief [i.e., believers in their own religions]. Or the reason [for this attitude] is that Islam is known as the name of religion, while belief is not known [as the name of religion]. That is why it is said, "Abode of Islam" and "Abode of Disbelief" and it is not said, "Abode of Belief" and "[Abode] of Denial". If disbelief means denial, the same applies to being named by it [i.e., disbeliever means one who denies]. Then, in terms of realizing the purpose of religion, belief is the fact that reason and transmitted reports testify assent to the unity of God Most High, that the creation and command of creatures belongs to Him, and that He has no partner in it. Then, Islam is submitting oneself with one's whole being, and [submitting everything] to God Most High with a servitude in which there is no partnership. Thus, [belief and Islam] realize a single purpose, except that the first is the belief in God and that what we mention [i.e., unity, creation and command, etc.] belong to Him, whereas the second [i.e., Islam] is making them for him [i.e., in terms of one's submission and servitude]. The following words of God, exalted is His praise, bear witness to what we have said: "God coins a similitude: A man in relation to whom are several part-owners, quarrelling, [and a man belonging wholly to one man]."[1630] This verse describes the Muslim as one belonging to one single master and the disbeliever as one belonging to quarreling partners.

iii) Then, a group said: The word Islam means sincere devotion linguistically and it is used in this sense in His statements: "When his Lord said unto him: Surrender! [He said: I have surrendered to the Lord of the Worlds]";[1631] and, "Say (O Muslims): We believe in God [and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered...]"[1632] Thus, [Islam] means that the servant devotes himself sincerely only to God Most High and does not make anything a partner in that. This is the same as what we have explained.

[1630] Q. 39:29.
[1631] Q. 2:131.

iv) Others said:

a) Islam is surrender and submission to God. In this sense, the Bedouin Arabs have been commanded to say, "We have surrendered", but here they will surrender to believers, not to God. In fact, God, the Majestic and Glorious, has said [to the believers about the hypocrites]: "You are more awful as a fear in their bosoms than God"[1633] and described them in His words: "They deem every shout to be against them. They are the enemy, [so beware of them!]"[1634] And there are other verses in which the fear of the hypocrites for the Companions of the Messenger of God is made apparent. For this reason, the hypocrites seemed to believe in God and His Messenger, but they were in denial in their hearts. Islam, on the other hand, is submission and surrender to God Most High with one's free will, just as people surrender to God in their nature and substances [i.e., involuntary bodily features].

b) But the meaning of belief is not so [outward], therefore belief was negated from [the Bedouin Arabs],[1635] although they seemed to possess it, for the place where belief truly resides is the heart, and the tongue just expresses it. That is why God Most High has testified that the hypocrites lie when they say they are believers, because the reality of [belief] is in the heart, and it did not [occur in their hearts]. Hence, their belief did not remain, and the profession of belief was established for them and nothing else. *Strength comes from God alone.*

v) Then, if the reality of Islam and the reality of belief are what we have mentioned, then the idea that one of them exists in reality while the other does not is false. This is why it has been said that [Islam and belief] are one in their referent, though the expressed nouns might differ. It is like [the terms] "human being", "son of Adam", "man" and "so-and-so". [Likewise], the meaning of [belief] differs from the plain sense meaning of Islam, but they are really one in the sense that the existence of one of them entails the existence of the other, except the situation that I have described when Islam is merely professed with the tongue. *God knows best.*

[1632] Q. 2:136.

[1633] Q. 59:13.

[1634] Q. 63:4.

[1635] This could also be a reference to the hypocrites. But a parallel with the discussion of Islam in this sub-section, in which first the Bedouin Arabs and then the hypocrites are considered, seems more logical.

3) Then, the principle is that it is irrational for one not to be a Muslim despite fulfilling all the conditions of belief, or not to be [a believer] despite fulfilling all the conditions of Islam. So, it has been established that these two are actually one [and the same]. It is known that one who it is possible to name by one [of Islam and belief] may also be named by the other, and that religions differ only by belief, and not by actions. When [belief] exists, then one deserves every known name [i.e., both Muslim and believer]. That is why what we have mentioned is necessary. In fact, God Most High has said: "Religion with God is Islam";[1636] and, "Whosoever seeks as religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him."[1637] Thus, the believer, in his attribute of being a believer: either enacts Islam, which is religion with God; or some but not all of it; or he has sought a religion other than His religion.

i) In the first case, he has accepted the truth.

ii) In the second case, even if he did not seek [another] religion [as a believer], he sought only part of the religion, which is inconsistent. On the contrary, God sees such a person in truth as a disbeliever.[1638] Then, every disbeliever may enact some of Islam, but does not by this have the name [i.e., "Muslim"], whereas the one I have mentioned [i.e., the believer] is named by it [i.e., "Muslim"]. So, it has been established that the believer enacts all [of Islam].

[1636] Q. 3:19.

[1637] Q. 3:85.

[1638] It seems that the allusion is to Scriptuaries who only accept some of God's messengers and not others. See Q. 4:150-51: "Lo! those who disbelieve in God and His messengers, and seek to make distinction between God and His messengers, and say: We believe in some and disbelieve in others, and seek to choose a way in between, such are disbelievers in truth; and for disbelievers We prepare a shameful doom."

iii) In the third case, God will make the abode of [those] believers Hell and will invalidate all that the messengers brought in terms of the commands accompanying belief in them. Then, he is not a Muslim by that measure, and he has come with a religion that will not be accepted. Thus, it has been established that [belief] is the whole of religion.[1639] *Strength comes from God alone.*

4) Then, as for the difference [between Islam and belief] from the report of Gabriel, upon him be peace, a difference in wording has been reported. According to what has been reported from Ibn ʿUmar (may God be pleased with both of them), the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, was asked about belief, then [he was asked] about the ordinances (*sharāʾiʿ*) of Islam, so he answered in the way mentioned in the question about Islam [in the other version]. Thus, this report [i.e., the one asking about the ordinances of Islam] is the explanation of the first report [i.e., the one asking about Islam]. The first report [in omitting the word "ordinances"] may be understood in two ways:

i) The narrator did not hear [the word] "ordinances" occurring in the question from the person from whom he narrated, so he narrated it that way [without "ordinances" and only as Islam]. The narration by Ibn ʿUmar supports that this happened [i.e., the addition of "ordinances"] and that the first variant [i.e., Islam without "conditions"] is unlikely. [This] is supported by Ibn ʿUmar, because [otherwise] his testimony would be discredited for narrating from Gabriel and from the Messenger other than what they have said. In fact, it is not implausible that narrators rely upon each other, and everyone narrates as he has heard. This gains credence by what is mentioned in some of the reports that the Prophet, upon him be peace, said, "This is Gabriel, and he came to teach you your religion", and in other [narrations] he said, "He came to teach you the matter of your religion." Thus, in the [second] report, there is "the matter of your religion", which is hidden from the [other] narrator. The same holds true in the original report [i.e., with respect to the word "ordinances"].

[1639] The point that al-Māturīdī is making is that if someone does not believe in God's religion, Islam, then the Law brought by messengers, which is predicated on belief, is nullified for them. A disbeliever in the Prophet Muḥammad, for instance, is not required to practice the Law of Islam. But then one's status in terms of belief is absolutely determinant of one's status in terms of being a Muslim.

ii) A second reason for sufficing with ["Islam" and not reporting "ordinances of Islam"] has two aspects:

a) They knew that it was impossible to be a believer without being a Muslim, or to be a Muslim without being a believer. Thus, due to the clarity of the matter, they may have thought that it would be sufficient to narrate that much.

b) The second [narrator, i.e., Ibn 'Umar] provides the explanation of the acts of Islam that [the first one] narrates with its name [i.e., Islam alone] according to figurative usage in naming something by its cause and what is connected to it.[1640]

5) Then, it has been established by the rulings brought by the Qur'an that [Islam and belief] are in fact one and the same. God Most High says: "[Say (O Muslims): We believe in God] and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, [and unto Him we have surrendered]."[1641] Thus, God made it necessary for them to be called by the name "Islam" [i.e., Muslim] through that which made them believers. The like of this has been mentioned in [Sura] Yūnus as follows: "And Moses said: O my people! If you have believed in God then put trust in Him, if you have indeed surrendered (unto Him)!"[1642] Thus, God deemed them Muslims through that by which they are believers. In fact, God, Mighty and Majestic, has said: "Say: Deem not your surrender a favor unto me; but God does confer a favor on you, in as much as He has led you to belief, if you are earnest."[1643] If they are truthful in their belief, God has deemed the actions from them as Islam, and likewise, they became believers thanks to it. The angels said: "Then We evacuated those of the believers who were there, but We found not there any just

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[1640] The argument here is that, even though Islam is essentially the same as belief, when the first narrator mentions "Islam", he is figuratively expressing the ordinances that are associated with it. This is why he refers to the outward pillars of Islam. Then, the second narrator acts to explain this meaning by explicitly adding the word "ordinances".

[1641] Q. 2:136.

[1642] Q. 10:84.

[1643] Q. 49:17.

(Muslim) persons except in one house."[1644] Thus, [the angels] considered Muslims to be believers. Then, similarly, God Most High gave the glad tidings by mentioning belief once and Islam at another time. It has therefore been established that these two are indeed one [and the same]. It is reported from the Prophet of God, upon him be peace, that he said, "Only a believer may enter Paradise" and again, "Only a Muslim may enter it."

i) Then, it is unquestionably a matter of inherited tradition that every Muslim is called a believer, and every believer is called a Muslim. So, the followers of the various schools of thought in Islam agreed that those who leave belief also leave Islam, and those who leave Islam also leave belief. Hence, there is no disagreement among all sects regarding the Hereafter, that the abode of the people of Islam is the abode of the people of belief, and vice versa. Again, God has divided people into groups in this world and the Hereafter and said, "Some of you are disbelievers and some of you are believers."[1645] Does a partisan of the position [of difference between them] think the Muslim is [a believer or a disbeliever]? Again, God Most High has said: "On the Day when (some) faces will be whitened and (some) faces will be blackened."[1646] So, what does a partisan of this position opine about the quality of the Muslim's face? Again, God says: "Whosoever surrenders his purpose to God";[1647] and He says, "And who is better in speech than him who says, "I am of those who are Muslims"?"[1648] Thus, what will happen if [this person] says, "I am of those who are believers"? Again, God says, "He who has done some good works, being a believer..."[1649] just as He says, "Whosoever surrenders his purpose to God."[1650] Then, it is said to the partisan of this position: Did this name [e.g., "Islam"] realize a worldly or otherworldly ruling to one of [the Muslims and the believers] and negate it from the other, or not? If it did realize [such a ruling to one], what is it? At which of the two otherworldly abodes will the Muslim or the believer arrive? Then, which one of the two names ["Muslim" and "believer"] is more praiseworthy in the visible world? What due right is there between the servant and his Lord, or between one servant and another that is realized by the existence of one of the names and not by the other? One [who argues that a Muslim is different from a believer] cannot find a way [to answer these questions]. Thus, the following is said to him: Since it is not the case that you ascribe one of the names [of "Islam" and "belief"] to either of [the Muslim and the believer] because of something that one of the two possesses and the other does not, and similarly, since what is harmful [to Islam is also harmful to belief], this distinction is meaningless and confusing.

[1644] Q. 51:35-36.
[1645] Q. 64:2.
[1646] Q. 3:106.
[1647] Q. 31:22.
[1648] Q. 41:33.
[1649] Q. 20:112.
[1650] Q. 31:22. This verse is repeated from just above, which is another sign of a weaker textual tradition in this Enquiry.

ii) Then, at the time of the Messenger of God, people were three groups: believers, disbelievers, and hypocrites. There is no rank other than these three for a Muslim or for a believer. Thus, [making a distinction between the Muslim and the believer] is contrary to the practice of the early people. On the other hand, members of all other religions stayed away from the name "Islam". Their aversion would be meaningless if they did not know the meaning of the name "Islam" and from what their nature fled. The messengers are also named ["Muslims"].[1651] Since the name [Islam] has been known by people, if one interprets [Islam] as meaning more or less than "religion" or "belief", the following results from it. If one considers Islam to be less than belief, then it is required that he practices that religion as true [i.e., becomes a Muslim], yet will not be a believer. If, on the other hand, [Islam] is more [than belief], then no aversion should occur due to being invited to belief when they [i.e., people of other religions] are not said to have become Muslims. Hence, if that [aversion] is present, it is established that the meaning of one is not more or less than that of the other.[1652] *Strength comes from God alone.*

[1651] See Q. 2:128, 3:7.

[1652] This argument seeks to show that possessing Islam without belief or belief without Islam is absurd, hence they must come together. First, al-Māturīdī considers the case in which Islam is "less" than belief. This would be someone who is a "Muslim" but not a believer. Such a person is a hypocrite and hence not a true Muslim. Then, he considers the case of belief as less than Islam. This would be a person who is a "believer" but not a Muslim, for instance a Jew or Christian who does not accept Islam. Yet, according to al-Māturīdī, such a person is a disbeliever. Hence, the link between belief and Islam is preserved.

Again, the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "Whoever exchanges his religion, kill him."[1653] Then, God explained His religion and said: "And he who rejects false deities and believes in God..."[1654] Then, [one who claims that Islam is different from belief] is asked: "Are you a Muslim or not?" If he says "No", he has exchanged God's religion. If he says "Yes", he is a Muslim by means of the action of belief, and by nothing else. Yet this report is about apostasy. It is known that [religion] is conviction, nothing else, and what is meant [in the report] is religion, that is, Islam. So, it has been established that [Islam] is known in limit and extent and whoever changes it will be known [too]. If actions other than conviction were religion, everyone would have exchanged his religion in all cases, because at every moment one is engaged in a different action of closeness [to God]. *Strength comes from God alone.*

Then, [one who discriminates between Islam and belief is asked]: In the reports you narrated about the interpretation of the meaning of Islam [i.e., the hadith of Gabriel], external deeds are mentioned. Likewise, hypocrites conform to believers in external deeds. In fact, [the Bedouin Arabs] are told, "Say, "We submit.""[1655] Now, is this really Islam or not? If he says, "Yes, it is indeed Islam", he will make [the deed of the hypocrites or unbelieving Bedouins] the Islam in His words, "Religion with God is Islam"[1656] and "I have chosen for you as religion Islam."[1657] Thus, it becomes necessary that His statement, "Whoso seeks as religion other than Islam it will not be accepted from him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter"[1658] and, "How shall God guide a people who disbelieved after their belief?"[1659] will be the same as when He says to them, "Say, "We submit"". Moreover, the report that has come about the presence of testification in regard to the people of hypocrisy and these actions [of Islam will be the same].[1660] In this case, sincere people and believers will seek a religion other than Islam [because they will be averse to being identical to the hypocrites] and abandon what God is pleased with for them, whereas the hypocrites will do [what God is pleased with]. This is an impossible situation. Thus, it is established that such an Islam [of the hypocrites] is [mere] submission and surrender.

[1653] See al-Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ, al-Jihād*, 149; *al-I'tiṣām*, 28; *al-Istitāba*, 2; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan, al-Ḥudūd*, 1; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan, al-Ḥudūd*, 25; al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan, al-Taḥrīm*, 14; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan, al-Ḥudūd*, 2.

[1654] Q. 2:256.

[1655] Q. 49:14.

[1656] Q. 3:19.

[1657] Q. 5:3.

[1658] Q. 3:85.

[1659] Q. 3:86.

[1660] This may refer to Q. 63:1: "When the hypocrites come unto you (O Muḥammad),

The reality of Islam, on the other hand, is religion in truth [i.e., heartfelt belief], not the external acts mentioned. The proof of this matter is that God says at the end of the sura: "They make it a favor unto you (Muḥammad) that they have surrendered (unto Him). Say: Deem not your Islam [a favor unto me; but God does confer a favor on you, inasmuch as He has led you to belief, if you are earnest]."[1661] If Islam were the outward things [i.e., the profession of belief and external deeds], how could He say, "If you are earnest"?[1662] Then, [the following is also stated in the verse]: that He made them Muslims because He led them to belief, not because of the outward things. Thus, belief is identical with Islam. Likewise, God says, "Whoso seeks as religion other than Islam it will not be accepted from him, [and he will be a loser in the Hereafter]",[1663] then He explained that religion which is Islam. God says, "How shall God guide a people who disbelieved after their belief?" Thus, He regarded that which is not accepted as religion to be other than the belief He described. Then, He charged those who changed the religion of Islam with falling into disbelief after belief, thus letting them know that [belief and Islam] are the same. In addition, [the verse] that preceded is sufficient proof: "Say (O Muslims): We believe in God and that which is revealed unto us] and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have [surrendered]."[1664]

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they say: We bear witness that you are indeed God's messenger. And God knows that you are indeed His messenger, and God testifies that the hypocrites indeed are speaking falsely."

[1661] Q. 49:17.

[1662] Q. 49:17.

[1663] Q. 3:85.

[1664] Q. 2:136.

In our opinion, the principle is that names are given to know those who possess them in the contexts of their rights and responsibilities, and that by which they have been promised and threatened.[1665] Then, the verses in which the names "belief" and "Islam" were mentioned left no one who adheres to the religion of Islam free to choose the name by which he should call himself. So, it has been established that the reality of [Islam and belief] is the same and that desiring to distinguish between the two is a groundless invention. *Strength comes from God Most High alone.*

May God bless our master Muḥammad and his pure family [*āmīn*].

1665 In other words, names have been given so that we can know and recognize the people who own them in terms of their worldly rights and responsibilities, as well as their otherworldly ends (*Translator*).

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Glossary

ʿabd (*ʿibād*) – servants (of God)
ʿajz – incapacity
ʿālim – omniscient
ʿaql – intellect, reason
amwāt – dead or inanimate things
ʿaraḍ – accident
aṣlaḥ – most beneficial
āya (pl. *āyāt*) – miracle; sign
ʿayn – (bodily) substance
baqāʾ – endurance
baʿḍ (pl. *abʿāḍ*) – part
dalāla – indication
dalīl (pl. *dalāʾil*) – evidence
ḍarūra – necessary
dhāt – essence, essential nature; entity
fanāʾ – annihilation
fiʿl (pl. *afʿāl*) – action
ghaḍab – anger
ghāʾib – unseen
ghayr (pl. *aghyār*) – other
ghayr mufāriq – inseparable
ḥādith (pl. *ḥawādith*) – temporal
ḥāl (pl. *aḥwāl*) – state
ḥaqq (pl. *ḥuqūq*) – due right
ḥaqīqa (pl. *ḥaqāʾiq*) – reality, truth
ḥaraka – motion
hastiyya – isness
ḥayāt – life
hayūlā – prime matter
ḥikma – wisdom
ḥudūth – temporality
ḥujja – argument, proof
ḥuṣūl – realization
huwiyya – selfhood
idrāk – perception
iḍṭirār – compulsion
iftirāq – separation
ijtimāʿ – joining, aggregation
ikhtiyār – free choice, free will
ilhām – (spiritual) inspiration
ʿilla – cause; efficient cause
ʿilm – knowledge
īmān – belief
irāda – will
irjāʾ – deferral
ism (pl. *asmāʾ*) – name
istiṭāʿa – ability
ithbāt – affirmation
ʿiyān – sensory knowledge
jabr – compulsion, determinism
jawhar (pl. *jawāhir*) – substance; atom; body
jiha – aspect
jism – body
juzʾ (pl. *ajzāʾ*) – part
juzʾ alladhī lā yatajazzaʾ – indivisible part, atom
kabīra (pl. *kabāʾir*) – major sin
karam – generosity
karāma – ennoblement
kasb – acquisition
kawn – being
kayfiyya – howness
khāliq – creator

khalq – creatures, creation; creating
kidhb – falsehood
maʿdūm – non-existent
maḥdūd – limited
māʾiyya – whatness
makān – place, space
maʿnā – determinant cause; meaning
mawjūd – existent
muḥdath – originated, generated
muḥdith – originator
mutaḍādd – contrary
mutanāhin – bounded
nafs – self, soul
nubuwwa – prophethood
qaḍāʾ – decree
qadar – determination
qadīm – eternal
qudra – power
quwwa – power; potency
riḍāʾ – contentment
risāla – messengerhood
sabab (pl. *asbāb*) – cause, means
safah – foolishness
ṣaghīra (pl. *ṣaghāʾir*) – minor sin
sakana – stillness
samʿ – tradition; hearing
ṣāniʿ – maker, creator
shayʾ – thing
shayʾiyya – thingness
shāhid – visible world
shirk – polytheism
ṣidq – truth
ṣifa (pl. *ṣifāt*) – quality, attribute
ṭabʿ (pl. *ṭabāʾiʿ*) – nature
tadākhul – interpenetration
tafaḍḍul – graciousness
takhlīq – creation, creating
taklīf mā lā yuṭāq – burdening beyond capacity
takwīn – existentiation, existentiating
tamannī – wishing
taqlīd – following traditional authority
taṣdīq – assent
tashbīh – resemblance
taʿṭīl – nullification (of attributes)
tawallud – indirect action
tawātur – mass transmission
tawḥīd – monotheism
ṭīna – primordial matter
wāḥid – one
wajh – aspect, configuration
waqf – suspension of judgment
wujūd – existence
zamān – time

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